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The report describes six projects supported by the Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Development and employing community action to combat juvenile delinquency: the Mobilization for Youth on New York City's lower East Side; the Syracuse Crusade for Opportunity in Syracuse, New York; the United Planning Organization, Washington, D.C.; Houston Action for Youth, Houston, Texas; Action for Appalachian Youth, Charleston, West Virginia; and HARYOU--ACT (Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited--Associated Community Teams) in Harlem, New York City. The reports delineate the project genesis, the target area, modes of organization, goals and assumptions, the staff and the organization utilized, the project itself, its results, and the community reaction. Drawing on the composite experience of the projects, the last chapter cites examples of community organization issues and offers suggestions to community organizers and social planners. A 16-item bibliography is included. (MK)

helping youth

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A STUDY OF SIX COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION PROGRAMS

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helping youth

A STUDY OF SIX COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION PROGRAMS

CHARLES F. GROSSER

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
Social and Rehabilitation Service
Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Development

FOREWORD

This publication is an in-depth study of six projects which received support from the Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Development. The projects were designed to develop comprehensive community action programs to deal with basic causes of juvenile delinquency. Although their organization and techniques differed, all were based on the assumption that social, structural, and environmental pathology were major causes of youthful deviance. Inherent in the concept of these programs was the belief that neighborhood residents needed to become *involved* in planning and implementing social services, that the *recipients* of these services had also to become *participants* in shaping the structure of the services.

This book was prepared for the Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Development by Dr. Charles Grosser, Associate Professor and Chairman of the Community Organization Sequence, New York University Graduate School of Social Work. *Publication, however, does not constitute official endorsement of Dr. Grosser's findings by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.*

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CHARLES F. GROSSER

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Almost four decades ago, the city slum was described as follows:

> ". . . community life, where it has not already disintegrated, is in the process of disintegration. Community institutions are ceasing to function. The church, the school, the family, the occupational group, the government, and the news have ceased to bear any direct relationship to local life. Behavior is individualized in the extreme. There is little or no public opinion. There is no common interest or cultural background. The greater part of the area is incapable of political action." [1]

This description has lost no potency over the years.[2]

The slum neighborhood remains isolated from the total community, its public institutions are inferior, its voluntary institutions sparse or nonexistent, and the services of such municipal departments as police, buildings, and sanitation are provided differentially.

During the past four years in its support of work in slum areas, the Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Development, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, has devoted considerable attention to the relationship between social systems of the urban slum neighborhood and the lives of youth. It has helped to finance programs which were based on the assumption that social, structural, and environmental pathology are major causes of deviant behavior in youth.

The approach to the problems of youth deviance innovated by the Office of Juvenile Delinquency required both the creation of new environmental resources and an improvement of the old ones. It was necessary for the projects to assume both a change and an additive function: the latter dealt only with filling environmental gaps; the former, with altering environmental conditions—social institutions, adaptive patterns, and voluntary associations—which might produce deviance.

The various projects developed comprehensive programs to prevent, control, and eliminate delinquent behavior. Some have provided delinquent and predelinquent youngsters with educational, vocational, recreational, and other rehabilitative innovations to assist them in overcoming, bypassing, or simply withstanding the onslaughts of their environment. So that the target communities would be strengthened through the enrichment of welfare, educational, and recreational resources, projects have supported selected programs of existing local public and voluntary agencies.

To meet the demand for social change required by such an environmental approach, the projects engaged in a variety of strategies. In the forefront was the attempt to engage neighborhood residents in self-determining community organization activities, to involve them in shaping the umbrella of services raised in their behalf. Programs that require the adjustment of environmental conditions must not only be made available, but must be offered in a way that is congenial to the impoverished. To realize this goal, self-determination and accountability, or the involvement of participants in determining the nature of service, must first exist.

It was also apparent that unless changes in social conditions take place at the behest of, and in response to the community, there is no way to assure that new patterns of adjustment will be socially desirable. Changes in environment might result in new forms of deviance rather than in delinquency prevention and control.[3] Involvement of residents is also the only way a demonstration program can be vested in the community with any degree of permanence, that is, with the hope that the program will continue after the sponsoring agency has left.

It appears clear that neighborhood self help through community organization effort has been implicit in the design of Office of Juvenile Delinquency projects from their inception.

An Issue of Public Policy

This historical commitment to community involvement, pioneered by the Office of Juvenile Delinquency programs, marks a significant point in the evolution of the American social welfare system. An integral part of this commitment is the idea that public benefits to which slum residents are entitled, are to be provided as a matter of legislative and administrative *right.* Thus residents have an appropriate role as determiners of the nature of services, rather than as supplicants. This policy position was expressed most clearly in a document prepared by the Demonstration Review Panel of the Office of Juvenile Delinquency, dated November 13, 1964. It stated:

> "The Panel is unanimous in its opinion that major involvement on the part of community residents to improve their own social situation is the *sine qua non* of a successful comprehensive program to combat delinquency in disadvantaged and demoralized communities. It is through such efforts that the American dream can begin to have meaning for the most deprived sectors of the population. It is through such efforts that self-esteem grows to replace the impoverished self-image that stigmatizes and stultifies delinquents in these neighborhoods. It is through such efforts that the spirit of mutual concern is stimulated so that emerging community programs and services can be responsive to the needs of those they purport to serve. Delinquency is most often an effort to extract from the world the satisfactions sought by troubled youth. Neighborhood action pro-

grams offer a socially sanctioned path for groups of neighbors to improve their share of life's satisfactions."

The programs of the Office of Juvenile Delinquency were forerunners of the extension of government in providing new and expanded social welfare services.[4] The above statement by the Demonstration Review Panel predated by almost a year the extensive debate around the maximum feasible representation of the poor—a debate which still continues. As a matter of operational need, the Office of Juvenile Delinquency had to assume burdens of public policy whose resolution will be evolved over generations. Not since the enactment of the Social Security Act in 1935 has there been an issue of similar significance in the welfare field.

It is an issue which inevitably develops when government assumes responsibility for the provision of service. The nature and definition of the *client* changes when a democratically elected administration undertakes to provide certain services. When welfare programs are provided by voluntary philanthropy, the recipient of service is seen as a client or beneficiary who receives assistance as a matter of *noblesse*. However, when public agencies sponsor such programs, the recipients of service are voters who have, at least in principle, the power to determine the policies which will affect the provision of service. They also ultimately have the power to remove and replace the providers of the services themselves.[5]

The community organization programs of the Office of Juvenile Delinquency projects can be seen as a microcosm of a major issue of our times.[6] That the different projects dealt with this issue in different ways will be amply illustrated in the chapters to follow. Mention is made here to point out that by facing up to the consequences of the issue, the Office of Juvenile Delinquency made a substantial contribution.

Community Organization Components

The comprehensive delinquency prevention project has brought a variety of community groups into organizational activity. In some cases, the delinquent and predelinquent youth themselves have been organized into self help, social action, and project policymaking groups. In most instances, however, with project encouragement, adult members of the community have been the participants in these organizational efforts. They have represented such various local organizations as neighborhood councils, PTAs, and churches on project boards and committees; they have participated as independent community groups in local affairs; they have been organized to redress specific grievances regarding housing, welfare, and recreation; and they have been elected as representatives of the neighborhood poor to participate in policymaking for the projects. It has also been adults, in the main, who have mounted the bulk of the social action programs.

Because the "who's who" of target, participant, and client is often unclear in community organization work, it is necessary to characterize these basic components in the context of Office of Juvenile Delinquency projects committed to serving deviant youth. These youth are the clients in each case. In most direct service programs, particularly clinically oriented individual services, i.e., case work and vocational counseling, the client is both the participant and the target of the rehabilitation strategy. This is not the case in community organization where participants are usually the instruments through which the client will ultimately benefit.

Thus, a neighborhood organization working for better schools is not itself the beneficiary of its efforts—the delinquent or unemployed school dropout is.[7] The target of this community organizing effort is, in this instance, the school system itself, not the delinquent dropout or the neighborhood organization. It is through the effective action of the organization (participants) vis-a-vis the school system (target) that the juvenile delinquent (client) is benefitted.

A system of interaction between these components is generic to all community organization efforts regardless of auspices or style. As will be seen, it can be a useful guide in examining community programs in delinquency prevention projects because it can provide a bench mark for measuring the extent to which these programs help fulfill project goals. Community organization programs can too easily fall into patterns of organizational self-interest and compliant, safe, or noncontroversial activity. Should this occur, they will neither affect targets, reach participants, nor serve clients.

The Office of Juvenile Delinquency comprehensive projects attempted to organize in the inner city slum, among isolated, defeated people whose major adaptive behavior for survival is fatalism, apathy, and suspicion. *Bringing neighborhood* groups together in community organization activities is therefore very difficult. The temptation is great to preserve the organizational entity once it is created, even when it means betraying organizational purposes. This deflection is usually subtle and gradual and may not always be recognized. By identifying the interacting components, function can be pinpointed and the pitfall of serving organizational interests recognized.

The Issue of Risk

In the interests of neighborhood participation in community organization, projects incurred risks from a variety of sources. All the projects described in this report found their populations with relative ease. The delinquent young man or woman and his family were clearly visible. They were poor, unemployed or marginally employed, members of minority groups, badly housed, frequently with no regular source of support except public assistance, out of school, unaffiliated, and unconsidered. The clients were characterizable as the urban poor, a group about which great concern was expressed in the early '60s.[8]

It was in the selection of targets that risks and consequences first became apparent. As has been indicated, the comprehensive environmental approach directed the delinquency projects to targets within the community.

Pragmatic experience and empirical research further directed them to specific institutions, many of which are agencies of city government. The selected population is in constant interaction with such public institutions as the schools, departments of public welfare, public housing, and law enforcement agencies. It is against these agencies that the clients accumulate a host of grievances.

Among this group in the early '60s additional target issues of high priority were: civil rights, particularly voting rights and the desegregation of employment and education; enforcement of housing codes; control over new programs being placed in the neighborhoods; the actions of the poor as community representatives on local poverty boards. Although different specific issues were raised from project to project, civil rights was a target issue of the day regardless of project.

As has been seen, relevant grievances often stem from the very social, political, and governmental institutions which the Office of Juvenile Delinquency brought together in order to develop the delinquency prevention project. Boards of directors are frequently made up of representatives from the agencies designated as targets. Thus there exists an anomalous circumstance wherein project sponsor and social change target are synonymous.

The selection and recruitment of community participants from the population to be served are complex and expose the projects to risks. It is much more difficult to locate and recruit active participants to work in community organization programs than it is to locate clients or targets. And this task of locating participants intensifies the problem of sensitive issues. To induce community participation, it is necessary to leave genuine discretion concerning the issues to be selected with the participant group. Often, this means that the strategic, political, or opportune choice is not made.

To overcome the apathy, alienation, and isolation of the target population, and to locate potential participants, community groups are frequently forced to recruit on the basis of residents' arousal over a particular issue or grievance. Frequently residents must also be shown a way to resolve their problems. All of these tasks involve risks because all interests from all sections of the community which perceive threat will seek to deflect the agency from its purpose.

In general, these risks were considered worthwhile. Such programs seemed the only viable way to attempt to overcome the isolation of the ghetto, and to reach the youth in target areas, who are in double jeopardy. They are twice removed from the community at large for they are isolated even from the ghetto itself. Apart from the usual developmental stresses, the estrangement between the youth and adults, in addition, reflects the disengagement and sense of futility which characterize many adult residents. Community organization efforts which attempt to create purpose and *esprit de corps* tend to reduce neighborhood isolation and adult apathy. The youth feel a part of the total community to the extent that they see their parents and other adults as part of it.

Scope and Method

This report reviews the community organization experience of six specific projects which received funds from the Office of Juvenile Delinquency. It does not attempt to present a comprehensive or composite view of community work.

As will be evident, the projects vary greatly in size, geography, and program. For the purposes of this report, a cross section was selected on the basis of such factors as diversity of experience, extent of the project's emphasis on community organization, and distinctive program features. Rather than attempting to explore the same issues in each program, efforts were directed to examining and evaluating a variety of issues relevant to community organization represented within these six projects.

The intent has been to distill, from the composite experience, those elements which will be useful to the general and professional community, and, in conclusion, to comment on some of the germane issues illustrated by the projects.

In preparation for this report, representatives of all the projects under study met to share and compare experiences; reports and other pertinent documents from the Office of Juvenile Delinquency were reviewed; site visits were made to the projects to observe program, meet staff, and interview clients and participants. Community informants affiliated with appropriate governmental and social welfare institutions were also contacted.

The usual disclaimers as to the limitations of such a survey are in order. The information elicited was restricted by time and availability of personnel. *The observations of projects and programs, and generalizations about them, reflect the author's perceptions and judgment; he bears full responsibility for the content of this report.* It is his conviction that the experience gleaned from these juvenile delinquency projects can add a fund of relevant material to a still meager body of knowledge concerning: grass roots organization; strategies for social change; the application of community development techniques to the urban slum; organizational structures in community development; the use of local, indigenous personnel as organizers; and the role of the professional community worker.

CHAPTER II:
MOBILIZATION FOR YOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y.

Project Genesis

Mobilization for Youth (MFY) is the forerunner and in many ways the prototype of the comprehensive juvenile delinquency prevention project. It was originally funded under a National Institute of Mental Health grant during President Eisenhower's Administration and received its action grant from the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime in 1962, during President Kennedy's Administration. As a part of its total community approach to the problems of preventing and controlling delinquency,[9] MFY proposed to overcome the apathy and defeatism of the slum dweller through its community self-help program. To this end, it undertook to organize the unaffiliated residents of the target area. Its rationale was that youth could not be successfully integrated into socially constructive community life unless their adult role models were themselves *a part of* the community. Until the adult residents of the community saw themselves as having some control over their environment, youth could not be convinced that antisocial behavior did not present the only viable way in which to participate in the community.

The Target Area

MFY's target area was chosen by the local settlement houses and other community institutions which originally conceived of the project. The area, which has since been expanded, originally consisted of 67 square blocks on New York City's Lower East Side, with a population of about 100,000.

The Lower East Side is a traditional port of entry in the U.S. Its population has always been characterized by many new arrivals. The ethnic composition is diverse, about one-quarter Jewish, one-quarter Puerto Rican, one-tenth Negro, and one-tenth Italian; the remaining 30 percent are largely East European and Chinese.

On such measures of social pathology as income, unemployment, number of households receiving public assistance, and the like, the MFY target area is typical of the urban slum. The MFY neighborhood school population is heavily overrepresented with Negro and Puerto Rican students. It is estimated that they comprise nearly 75 percent of the public school pupils, but make up only 35 percent of the residents. The 16 elementary and 5 junior high schools in the area are subject to *de facto* segregation and other pathologies which typify the New York City slum school.

In unthinking moments, observers are apt to characterize the Lower East Side as a highly serviced community, based on the fact that there are a half dozen settlement houses in the area. These include some of the oldest, largest, and best known in the Nation such as the Grand Street, Henry Street, and University Settlements, and the Educational Alliance. A judgment of this kind, however, is valid only with reference to the absolute absence of such programs in other city slum neighborhoods, for in relation to the needs of the neighborhood, the Lower East Side is grossly underserviced.

The bulk of the target population resides in low income housing, with well over half located in overcrowded substandard tenements frequently lacking hot water, private baths, and toilets. In comparison with other slum communities, a relatively high proportion of the residents, about one third, reside in public housing projects. There are six low income and three middle income projects in the target area.

Although in many ways the Lower East Side is distinctive, its social ills are typical. Unemployment, juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, petty crime, school failure and dropout, housing violations and the like, establishes its identity as a typical urban slum community.

Goals and Assumptions

The MFY community development program[10] saw itself as an instrument of social and institutional change. It assumed that the masses of poor (unaffiliated) people are an effective source of power. The MFY community development efforts would be directed to helping the poor use this potential power to make known their needs. The exercise of power would also make possible the redress of grievances without recourse to spokesmen or other outside intermediaries.

Social work and the other service professions have traditionally devoted their efforts toward rehabilitating the individual so that he may more effectively utilize the social, educational, and recreational resources of the community. The bulk of MFY's program was directed toward this end. The community development program, however, recognized and responded to the limitations of such case-by-case redress of grievances. It therefore directed itself toward the alteration of massive public bureaucracies so that client needs could be more satisfactorily served. MFY assumed that agencies of city and state government would be responsive to petitions brought collectively by large numbers of clients, rather than individually or in small groups. In this way, the community development program committed itself to directing local residents to social action in support of self determined objectives.

Apathy, defeatism, and alienation deplete poor people of the resources by which they might change their lot. MFY thinking assumed that successful organizational efforts would have a highly salutary effect on the individuals participating in them. MFY youngsters who participated in the August 1963 Civil Rights March on Washington were a good example of this theory in action. For minority group ghetto youngsters, many of whom left the Lower East Side for the first time, the march with a quarter of a million fellow demonstrators had a pronounced "therapeutic" effect. Each youngster felt himself a part of something very important, and each was shown, in the most dramatic way possible, how as an individual, allied with others, he might affect the course of events.

Modes of Organization

To achieve its general objectives, MFY community development program began in the neighborhood with a variety of organizational plans. It attempted to organize local unaffiliated persons on such bases as proximity, common ethnic or cultural backgrounds, existing informal unaffiliated groups, and children attending the same school.

In bringing its community organization program to the Lower East Side, MFY negotiated with the existing Lower East Side Neighborhood Association (LENA), which is made up of social agency, business, church, political and community groups and leaders. The final decision provided that MFY would grant the Lower East Side Neighborhood Association substantial contract funds to strengthen and expand its activities. MFY would concurrently directly operate an organizational program geared toward the unaffiliated and the nonmembers in the target area.

With hindsight, this decision seems well suited to the task of organizing the unaffiliated. It would not have been possible to work with experienced, organizationally-oriented, affiliated persons who are primarily white and middle-class and at the same time work with inexperienced, non-English-speaking, isolated minority group residents.

Even under this arrangement considerable strain developed as MFY sought to bring heretofore unaffiliated groups into contact with established community groups. There was suspicion on all sides. The affiliated and unaffiliated each presumed MFY was acting on behalf of the other.

The MFY community development program also participated in the establishment of a Lower East Side Antipoverty Board. This was an attempt to facilitate the organization of a citizen assembly, which, in turn, would democratically choose the local board to take responsibility for the administration of antipoverty programs for the neighborhood.

LENA Councils and Divisions

Under contract with the Lower East Side Neighborhood Association, MFY provided funds to establish a number of neighborhood councils as well as community-wide divisions organized around such issues as community planning, housing, health and education, and civil rights. The newly invigorated neighborhood councils soon petitioned the parent body, LENA, for increased representation on its Board. The LENA Board of Directors acceded to this request. Additional representatives from neighborhood councils were added, giving a number of local neighborhood people a larger voice in the formal affairs of the organization.

With these additional council representatives, the Board more accurately reflected the neighborhood population. But LENA remained an organizationally-oriented group. This characterization does not imply a passive or conservative bent. On the contrary, member groups such as the tradition-enriched settlements, the highly devoted outpatient clinic, the liberal clergy, all contributed to a vigorous social action program. Neighborhood councils and LENA sent representatives to the 1963 March on Washington and participated in numerous other local civil rights rallies and demonstrations. There was also activity in the housing area, including the organization of tenants around code violations and the allocation of community resources for new middle and low income housing for the neighborhood. Activity in the area of education, particularly around the issues of quality education and school integration, was also initiated by LENA.

Direct Service Programs

In bringing people with common problems together, the MFY community development program attempted to provide a basis for increased community participation through the collective solution of problems. It was expected that this participation would lead to ultimate involvement in ongoing community activities.

Traditional, formal voluntary organizations tend to deal with abstract social problems. In contrast, MFY's organizational effort defined social problems in individual, personal terms. It sought to bring together residents so that they might obtain the kinds of services they needed in their daily lives. For example, community development efforts in tenements grew out of the problems residents had involving lack of heat and hot water and building code violations. In education, organization was around such issues as more teaching time, textbooks, and counseling appointments.

For the many recipients of public assistance, organization was on the basis of such grievances as court support orders defaulted by the husband but deducted from the monthly family welfare allowance, and nonrecurrent budget items on which the Welfare Department was remiss. In each area of activity, the object of bringing people together was redress of common grievances.

During the first several years, service-oriented groups were formed along the following lines: tenants associations and housing clinics which dealt mostly with the problems of tenement residents, occasionally with the problems of public housing; consumers aid clinics devoted to the problems of installment buying and making the services of the legal unit available in regard to these problems. In addition, a variety of school interest groups were formed. Initially these attempted to integrate minority group parents into existing PTAs and subsequently devoted themselves to representing the particular views of their constituents. Organizations of public assistance recipients came together to provide assistance to families in negotiating for benefits. Finally, neighborhood groups, dealing with issues such as the relocation of residents dispossessed as a result of urban renewal, the lack of safety at street crossings, and the existence of local narcotics trade, recruited members from those most concerned about these problems.

Experience with these groups suggests that a number of problems are inherent in a direct service approach. A common service need frequently draws together a group of individuals who are disparate in all other characteristics. They may share a problem yet be widely dispersed over the neighborhood; they may represent a broad age range and have few, if any, additional common interests. Such factors provide little basis for permanent organization.

Such groups had to devote all their efforts to meeting the ongoing service needs of their members. Strategies for social action and institutional change were thus enormously diluted as the organization's resources were swamped by the mass of individual problems. It frequently became virtually impossible to distinguish the community development program which worked with public assistance clients, from MFY's individual services program, which also worked with public assistance clients but was directed toward individual adjustment. MFY set up dual programs so that community organization would be relieved of the need to provide individual services to public assistance clients. Such services were provided by individual service staff members whose case loads included the membership of the Welfare Clients' Group. This dual strategy is currently in operation and has enabled successful client self help efforts.

An additional problem arose as groups successfully redressed their service related grievances and chose to dissolve rather than move on to new tasks. The hypothesis that beginning experience will induce a continuing process of community involvement was not upheld.

Despite the problems posed by direct service programs, some accomplishments have been realized. Beginning organizational experience has been provided to persons with absolutely no organizational background. This is a significant achievement since organizational experience is a requisite for successful community development participation.

The hypothesis that self help effort which satisfies a particular service need can be utilized in other, continuing social action issues has been supported. For example, Mobilization of Mothers, a dozen women seeking greater educational service for their children, became engaged in a widespread campaign to alter the school system.

Working with Existing Groups

Contrary to popular belief, the inner city slum community abounds in organized groups. They are, however, informal, unstructured, frequently temporary in nature, and are themselves unaffiliated. In a survey of local neighborhood organizations conducted by MFY research staff during the planning period, 180 separate such groups existed within the target area. When this survey was conducted again two years later at the outset of the action phase, 250 groups were counted. Many located there previously were no longer in existence and many of the groups which appeared later had not existed at the time of the first survey.

Such groups lack the resources and contacts with which to engage large formal organizations on behalf of their members. The MFY Community development program undertook to work with these existing informal organizational entities with the aim of having them acquire characteristics which would enable them to participate successfully in the organizational life of the community.

Several strategies were employed. MFY staff workers, professional and indigenous, were assigned to work full time with these informal organizations. To provide the groups with resources whereby they could maintain headquarters, telephone service, and make mailings, funds were made available, first administered through MFY and, subsequently, as grants administered by the organizations themselves.

In some instances, MFY attempted to bring together a large number of small groups into a council or association. Through such an arrangement, groups could maintain their autonomy, yet participate in community-wide action programs about which there was consensus. The following groups were among those organized in this way. The Council of Puerto Rican organizations, composed of 25 hometown, social, athletic and church groups, was assigned a worker by MFY and helped to set up a storefront headquarters. The Negro Action Group was formalized by MFY out of a loose association of Negro residents largely from public housing projects.

With the Association of Pentecostal Ministers, MFY attempted to bring together about 40 ministers from informal storefront churches. A council of Negro ministers was also drawn from local storefront churches.

As might be expected when attempts were made to build representative groups, organizational interests often intrude. Competition among groups arises, both for staff and material resources. Organizations begin to plan their activities in terms of their consequences in prestige and influence rather than for their impact on constituents or the community as a whole.

As various groups vied for organizational strength and self sufficiency, community coalitions became more elusive. Coalitions demand compromise and adjustment on the part of individual groups. Groups often see these demands as restrictive and they tend to revert to their old, informal "go-it-alone" patterns. Oligarchy, the nemesis of the conventional formal organization, becomes a problem—as the organizations acquire resources, their leadership tends toward greater control, and their membership to less involvement.

Young Adult Action Group

A Young Adult Action Group (YAAG) comprised of Lower East Side youth was organized in an attempt to direct the anger, frustration, and hurt often expressed in crime, violence, and drug addiction, toward meaningful activity and social change. This organization recruited members from MFY's various programs and the general youth population. YAAG participated in a number of direct actions such as visits to Washington, D.C. on behalf of youth employment and civil rights legislation. On one such visit to the capital, YAAG representatives met with Senators and Congressmen to discuss these problems. The group also engaged in less dramatic social activity in the neighborhood as well as in forums on topics of interest to them. Although their efforts did not produce discernible social change, they were of great benefit to the young adult participants. The life style of the YAAG members was noticeably affected as were their aspirations and ambitions. The activities of the organization succeeded in demonstrating to some YAAG members the viability of conventional community life.

As YAAG developed, its membership changed. More recently, it is divided between aggressive and passive subgroups. The former tend to reject the social action activities of YAAG and MFY as useless, and has been critical of the assignment of white agency staff members to their organization. The other group tends to be less verbal and more committed to the organization's earlier pattern of social action activities. It is dissatisfied with the fact that YAAG is not doing anything; that their time is devoted to hearing arguments among the members and staff. The resulting impasse has produced a stop in activities. The one exception is a dance held to raise funds for the YAAG treasury. In the process of organizational evolution and the graduating out of its earlier members, YAAG seems to have abandoned its earlier aim of redressing common grievances. It appears to be at a point where the only action it is capable of is action which supports the organization itself.

The Ad Hoc Direct Action Groups

Direct action on timely social issues is perhaps the most dramatic and most easily organized grass roots activity. Coalitions organized around such activities are usually made on an ad hoc basis. The ongoing demands of continuing organizations are avoided. The issues themselves, around which these ad hoc groups are drawn, are frequently dramatic and attract wide support. Since the MFY community development program paralleled a vigorous expansion of the civil rights movement, opportunities for this kind of direct action were readily available. Examples of such activities include the forementioned 1963 Washington March, a march to Albany for the $1.50 minimum wage, and community-wide voter registration campaigns.

In many of these actions, participation of the grass roots target population was under the aegis of citywide, state, or national leadership. This provided an opportunity for local residents to learn leadership techniques by emulation and demonstration. In addition, the contacts, associations, and communications channels opened by these direct action strategies remain resources which can be called on for other occasions and times.

The range of direct action strategies is broad. In some cases, such as the Washington March or the minimum wage demonstration, they are sanctioned by virtually the total community, including public officials. In other instances, such as a school boycott or rent strike, they are viewed as highly controversial by segments of the community, and are severely attacked both by public officials and the local press. When such direct action groups are engaged in controversial areas, they can produce problems for the parent organization. This was the case with Mobilization for Youth.

Public Criticism

On August 16, 1964, the *New York Daily News* began an eight-month campaign of articles and editorials attacking Mobilization for Youth. The opening story, which occupied the entire front page, was headlined, "Youth Agency Eyed for Reds." The article referred to a "lengthy investigation by the *News*," and was directed almost entirely toward the community development program. However, in the same edition, in the magazine section, a feature appeared headlined "Clinic Helps Kids to Read." It described a special MFY reading program involving more than a thousand Lower East Side youngsters. In subsequent issues, the *News* made clear its abhorrence of the MFY approach to community self help (omitting any further reference whatsoever to continuing programs such as the clinic).

During the period between the opening *Daily News* attack and the issuance of a vindicating statement by the Secretary of Labor and the Attorney General, various investigations were launched by the New York City Department of Investigation, the New York State Senate, several Federal funding sources, and the President of the City Council.

Despite the ultimate vindication of the project, the crisis had profound effects, including the reorganization of the Board and a tightening of administrative controls.[11] Through the extensive publicity attending the entire sequence of events, a public lesson in moderation and prudence was imparted to present and future social welfare planners.

In the aftermath of this agency crisis the relevancy of community development activity to the prevention of delinquency was confirmed by a number of statements.[12] The most comprehensive was that of the Demonstration and Review Panel.[13]

Recently, community organization activities have been expanded; MFY is revising, discontinuing, and beginning new programs.

Ongoing Organizational Issues

The MFY community development program has had the opportunity to develop experience with a number of pervasive issues in grass roots organization including: the conflict between service and social action; temporary vs. permanent organization; organization along racially homogeneous or separate lines; and, provision of education in community organization.

Over the years, the MFY community development program has attempted to organize racially integrated neighborhood groups. This apparently stemmed from ideological conviction. The practical evidence on the street, however, seems to indicate that a more viable technique is to encourage organization along separate ethnic and religious lines. Although this flouts some commonly held values of democratic participation, there seems to be no question as to its practicality. When separate organizations are created, their creators articulate the short-term objective of bringing together these separate groups. Whether this objective can be realized remains to be seen.

Several new educational plans have been developed by the MFY community development program. For example, a school-community program, which originally devoted itself toward closing the gap between the schools and parents, has shifted the target from school to parent. The basic purpose of this revised program is the education and sophistication of the parent. The immediate aim is to involve mothers in the educational experience of their children. The long-range goal is to involve the parents in the schools' Parents Associations. The program hopes to rectify the situation wherein low income minority group parents do not participate in the Parents Associations.

Another educational program deals with consumers' problems and has brought residents together into local buying groups (food cooperatives) and provided training in consumer problems for representatives of other local community development projects. It is hoped that they will return to their parent groups and foster further consumer education activities.

The MFY community development neighborhood program has devoted considerable attention to participants' use of existing machinery of government for petition and change. They have appeared, for example, as witnesses before the joint Legislative Committee on Child Care Needs and offered testimony at New York City Board of Estimate hearings.

A notable community-wide effort to use the democratic process was led by MFY groups. It involved many other interest groups in the target area and consisted of a series of Voter Registration Campaigns. As a consequence, practices of the local election boards have been altered to make registration easier. In the course of these campaigns, MFY community development program participants petitioned the Board of Election for such accommodations. They also brought up numerous grievances documenting impediments to registration. Such activity did not engender good feeling for the project among the politicians, registrars, or designated election inspectors whose behavior was criticized. It did, however, create a climate in which the election machinery became more responsive to the lower class neighborhoods in the community. It should be noted that corrective actions taken by the Board of Elections were not limited to the Lower East Side, but were established for the city as a whole.

From MFY experience in several annual registration campaigns, staff interest in a political education program evolved. It was necessary to counteract the view of local residents who tended to dismiss the electoral process as phony, meaningless, and corrupt. They were therefore unwilling to register or, if registered, became so confused and discouraged at achieving anything through the electoral process that they did not vote. A practical workshop in day-to-day politics was proposed as the natural culmination of attempts by MFY community development program to provide local residents with the means by which they can understand the community decision making process.

It was also necessary to provide residents with knowledge about the consequences of their utilizing such political processes as primaries and the designation of district leaders. Appeals to the low income resident's sense of obligation as a citizen are often fruitless and somewhat presumptuous. MFY hopes to provide, through a pragmatic political education, handbook-type information which will enable the resident to understand and use the political process. He will be educated so that his expectations will be modest and his goals long range; he will avoid the discouragement which results when someone registers, votes, and finds that life remains unchanged. Rather than withdrawing from the electoral process, he can participate in it. It is hoped that he will then begin to acquire access to the same political channels of expression used by the general community for self expression and the redress of grievance.

CHAPTER III: SYRACUSE CRUSADE FOR OPPORTUNITY, SYRACUSE, N.Y.

Project Genesis

The Syracuse Crusade for Opportunity (Crusade) which serves as the Office of Economic Opportunity's Community Action Program (CAP) coordinating agency for established agencies, grew out of the Mayor's Commission for Youth. The original plan[14] called for the development of community action groups which would become independent of the original sponsoring board and then be responsible to an Advisory Committee on Community Development.

The Target Area

The Crusade proposal designated "action areas" on the basis of a "relatively high concentration of families with problems living in certain neighborhoods." Poverty, transiency, dependency, and physical blight characterize the environment youth must somehow overcome. Youth delinquency, dropout, and unemployment rates in these areas clearly indicate greater handicaps here in making the transition from adolescence to responsible adulthood.

The target area was thus chosen on the basis of the pathology concentrated in it, not its amenability to neighborhood community organization efforts.

The special characteristics of a small city such as Syracuse pose unique problems. The deteriorated housing, once mostly single-family dwellings, are now multiple dwellings. Residents are spread over a large area; the interaction that occurs in crowded tenement districts does not exist here. Even the low income housing projects are only two stories high.

Syracuse is an industrial city, where corporations maintain large plants. Extensive highway building and urban renewal development also provide employment. On the whole, residents do not lack jobs; they are more concerned about the relatively low pay for antipoverty on-the-job training programs.

Goals

The Crusade's major emphasis was to be on a "community development approach so that the action residents themselves become the chief agents for changing the character of their neighborhoods . . . emphasis will be placed on a high degree of autonomy so that unnecessary restraint is avoided." The proposal goes on to speak of community involvement as a way of overcoming dependency, apathy, and isolation, with the aim of creating a healthier environment.

Modes of Organization

A Community Development Task Force consisting of residents of low income areas spurred the Crusade movement toward the formation of neighborhood boards. It suggested the need for neighborhood problem-solving through sharing ideas and coordinating the activities of existing groups. The Task Force repudiated the term "target areas" since it felt this implied passivity.

Pursuing its task of developing viable neighborhood organization, Crusade moved toward involving residents in elections. Plans were formulated to set up neighborhood boards in three designated areas which more or less constituted natural areas of residence. These were not to be boards in the usual sense; rather vehicles for developing local services and organizations, and for providing information and referral services. It was hoped that the special characteristics of the areas selected would yield useful experience for future programming elsewhere.

Detailed and well-thought-out procedures were utilized in the election process. Advisory councils from each neighborhood appointed nominating committees which solicited potential candidates. The elections consisted of two phases, nominations and voting. Both phases called for publicity, knocking-on-doors, and contacting other organizations. Staff and volunteers succeeded in registering about 25 percent of the target population, of whom 12 percent (1500) voted. This is quite high in the light of results from similar attempts in other cities.

Neighborhood Boards

The local boards—the East Side Board, the West Side Board, and the Tallman Board—as finally constituted, consisted of 10 elected representatives from the neighborhood, 10 representatives designated by their groups, and 10 youth. The boards became the real organizational base in each neighborhood.

The East Side Board is 100 percent Negro; the West Side is 75 percent white; Tallman Board membership is about 75 percent Negro (in proportion to the Negro percentage of its population, this is an overrepresentation).

All three board presidents are women, two Negro and one white. Leadership is articulate, interested, and involved. Each board is staffed by five untrained neighborhood workers, recruited from the neighborhood to which they are then assigned, and an untrained supervisor.

The Tallman Board, the last to be set up, profited from the experiences of the previous two in that it has been able to achieve greater resident participation. Attendance at meetings and other forms of participation have remained at a high level. This area had few functioning agencies or community organizations prior to Crusade.

A variety of neighborhood organizations have delegated representatives to the three Boards, including church and civic groups, mothers' clubs, and civil rights groups. Several other action groups as well as unaffiliated individuals decided to join the local boards.

In addition to meeting as a group, each board utilizes a committee structure. Legal, education, recreation, and housing committees are free to pursue their respective areas in terms of rendering aid to individuals or mounting a community campaign. Board members thus have a range of issues to choose from, depending on their individual interests and concerns. This committee structure also has virtue because it is flexible and allows each person to find his place. But interest in the committees has proven difficult to sustain over a long period.

From time to time, the three Boards have joint meetings to discuss issues of importance. Issues the boards have dealt with together and separately include: educational provisions for high school equivalency tests; alleged overcharging by utilities companies; housing problems; and development of a supervised recreation area. Socials have been held; a day camp, car pools, a day-care center, a teen canteen, and art appreciation courses are planned.

A major weakness of the neighborhood boards stems from the Crusade proposal's failure to elaborate sufficiently the implementation of community action concepts. The boards have not yet introduced campaigns on community issues; rather, they have provided services for individuals.

In at least one area, it was evident that local board members already had a sense of neighborhood. At meetings, they spoke of distinguishing characteristics, loyalties, and local problems. Not having an articulated action plan in this instance was of little consequence. This was not the case in the East Side of Syracuse which is an urban renewal area. Here, people are continuously being displaced; there are poor shopping facilities; recreation facilities are lacking; low-cost housing projects are located in this low income area. Yet, these issues and lack of neighborhood identification are not dealt with in the board program. It is apparent that a more comprehensive self-help strategy than services to individuals is required to solve community problems.

The local boards are in a transition period. They are gradually evolving into neighborhood action organizations. A recent issue—the lack of adequate recreation facilities—pointed up the need for organized planning.

Youth Activity

Youth who work along with the boards are, by and large, participating in other parts of the Crusade program such as skills training and job placement. The community recognizes the need for independent youth organizations whose representatives can sit on the board and have a real voice.

The idea of getting together to advance mutual objectives has filtered down to some of the young people. For example, a number banded together to picket their board, demanding better training facilities and the retention of their favorite counselor. The sponsoring agency thus became the target for the youth who had absorbed social action techniques.

Another instance of unplanned activity occurred when one of the members on the West Side Board, a minister, succeeded almost single-handedly in attracting "hard-to-reach" youth to a teen lounge in his church.

By and large, as is generally the case, the young people found it difficult to participate as part of the adult organization. Their attendance began to drop off. No special Crusade staff has been assigned to cope with this problem. Programs have not provided young people with their own structure which would allow them to develop their own issues in their own style, at the same time retaining significant ties with the adult organization. Yet there exists a nucleus for such development in the many organizations—aside from the Crusade—working with young people.

Staff Utilization

The proprietary, active role assumed by lay leaders, who are more and more being introduced into the detailed functioning of the organization, has resulted in conflict between professionals and nonprofessionals. Roles are not clear. Crusade's eagerness to involve local people in the first place, and its desire to reinforce the feeling that the organization belongs to them, is largely responsible for the confusion of roles. A number of the leaders do not acknowledge a division of labor between themselves and the professionals. As the leaders insist on making more of the decisions—administrative as well as policy-forming—the role of the staff is being altered.

If the professional is to succeed in creating a genuine people's organization, he must face the fact that a change in role is inevitable. Independent functioning on the part of the client—a key concern of the professional—will be exhibited as residents appropriate duties and responsibilities originally held by staff. The Crusade organizers are prepared to alter their roles and recognize the positive aspects of this change. However, it is sometimes dysfunctional to place technical matters calling for professional, administrative decisions in the hands of laymen, as subsequent staffing problems have indicated.

In keeping with its interest in involving the neighborhood boards, the Crusade Board has allotted one-third of its seats to local delegates. The governing body, The Crusade Corporation, has a total membership of 157. It appears to be referring an increasing number of issues to the local boards. While this achieves decentralization and democratic decision making, it also enables The Crusade Corporation to abdicate responsibility for unpopular decisions.

The original Crusade proposal focused on such problems as unemployment, delinquency, and displacement; the issues now posed by local leadership are, in the main, educational and recreational.

Crusade is developing teen activities, children's parties, camping and recreational facilities. In areas where organizations already existed, Crusade has brought about greater unity among these organizations through educational and recreational programs benefitting youth. The specificity and visibility of such programs, as well as their noncontroversial nature and potential for broad support, provided the bases for resident coalitions. These local coalitions, which generally seem to reflect stable working class and middle class concerns, facilitated the organization of neighborhood boards. As a result, Crusade has succeeded in developing viable community-based organizations in the neighborhoods.

Where Crusade goes from here will in large part depend on: the impact of staff turnover; the morale of staff; the attitudes and feelings of the residents; the ability of new staff to move in without a loss in continuity. Indications are that the leaders of the neighborhood boards are prepared to move ahead on their own.

Although Crusade staff views the project at its nadir, local neighborhood board leaders speak of future plans, *their* organization and *their* community, with enthusiasm. Staff is viewed as there to help them with their problems. Defeat or dismay regarding staff turnover, if present, has not been observable. Community ties, interests, and identifications seem strong, which suggests that activity and organization will continue in the absence of the present professional staff.

CHAPTER IV:

UNITED PLANNING ORGANIZATION, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Project Genesis

The planning and demonstration project, Washington Action for Youth, had singled out census tracts around Cardozo Senior High School, a high juvenile delinquency area, as the target area within which to experiment with several delinquency prevention programs. It was estimated that 70 percent of the population in that area are below average in socio-economic status.

Findings indicated "an association between juvenile delinquency rates, socio-economic conditions and family composition.[15] While only 9 percent of the population live in the poorest areas, 23 percent "of the youth referred to court each year reside there." On the basis of a survey conducted in the Cardozo area, it was concluded that "opportunity channels for fulfilling their aspirations are blocked."

The "task of intervention" as conceived by Washington Action for Youth, which associated community poverty and deviant behavior primarily with social processes, was to design and implement an "evolutionary process of community change and development . . . a strategy of change to move a community and its people from the stage of disarray, inefficiency, and underdevelopment to a higher stage of order, purposefulness, and well-being."

The instrument of intervention was to be the Neighborhood Development Project Center (NDP) which would furnish a range of services and reach out actively to find people who needed help. Citizen involvement and participation in community development would complement these services, bringing power and authority to bear to effect change.

The functions of Washington Action for Youth were absorbed by the United Planning Organization (UPO), a nonprofit corporation formed in 1962 for the purpose of planning, conducting, coordinating, and evaluating social and economic programs in a wider target area.

The Target Area

The enlarged target area includes Washington, D.C. and six surrounding suburban communities. The city's population is about 60 percent Negro;

the population target reached by the UPO community program is almost exclusively Negro. The UPO emphasis, however, has been on the concerns of low income groups rather than racial questions or minority problems.

Generally speaking, despite the prevalence of residential segregation, the racial issue in Washington appears subordinate and more muted than in other cities. This may reflect the social characteristics of the city itself, as well as the degree of social differentiation that exists in the Negro community. The city is populated by a large stable working force, many of whom are educated and skilled. As the main source of employment, the Federal government undoubtedly influences the public posture employees assume. In addition to career and white collar workers integrated at least on the job, there are substantial numbers of Negro homeowners, Negro-owned businesses, and long-term residents with deep roots.

Approximately three-fourths of the people in need of assistance request help in obtaining jobs. Housing rates next in importance. A serious housing issue is the large number of evictions, the result of low rent allowances to public assistance recipients. Another matter of concern relates to police relations with citizens.

A possible exception to the aforementioned relative racial harmony is the Cardozo area which reflects the severer problems and population characteristics, such as strong nationalist sentiments, ordinarily associated with the urban slum. Rural newcomers to the city tend to settle here, with all the attending problems. Some of the NDP areas face urban renewal; others have to contend with problems growing out of the administration of public housing projects.

Goals

UPO's purposes include stimulating self-organization, encouraging disadvantaged people to participate in public decisions which affect their lives, and providing a network of specific services which will expand the opportunities to attack those immediate problems which must be solved before individuals can turn their attention to the welfare of the neighborhood as a whole. "Changes in the institutional responses to the problems of the poor is a basic aim of the UPO program. Change is to be accomplished through the combined efforts at institutional reform and increasing the abilities of the poor to cope with the institutions of the majority society." [16]

Beginning with the fiscal year 1965, funds were made available so that the program projected originally for the Cardozo region could be expanded into other areas.

Modes of Organization

Nine Neighborhood Development Project Centers are operating in a defined territory. Each project director is responsible to a group of neighborhood people organized into a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC selects or approves the appointment of the director and hires local staff, who are predominantly Negro. Administrative ties to the UPO are maintained through a city-wide body of CAC representatives. The CAC performs neighborhood functions through committees on housing, welfare, and consumer education. In many instances, these committees are both recipient and dispenser of the services.

Professional consultation, direction, and coordination is provided to CAC by UPO staff. UPO-employed coordinators work with each center to assist generally in community organization work; they are also responsible for provision of services in areas such as housing, credit unions, consumer education, welfare. Other services such as legal aid are administratively independent of UPO.

Neighborhood Development Projects

A description of the background and operation of several of the Neighborhood Development Projects will illustrate their general functioning. The overall strategy of the NDPs is to attempt simultaneously to change both people and institutions. This is done through educational programs, i.e., consumer education; the provision of a variety of direct services, i.e., legal; and social action to change the welfare system.

In the near North East, initiative rested with the UPO community organizer who spoke to residents in churches and community meetings about the desirability of setting up a project. As a result of such contacts, discussions, and forums, a Citizens Advisory Committee was developed, and it then became the contracting agency. Part of the responsibility for the contracts was parceled out to an influential settlement house in the neighborhood.

The CAC, in turn, became the body responsible for hiring staff. One view stressed economic need as the basis for employment; at the same time, it was recognized that the ability to produce was necessary. The result was a mixed staff; some more able than others and hired for varied reasons. Employees included a lay preacher, a cab driver, and a person who was chronically unemployed.

Neighborhood workers canvassed the area to elicit the concerns of residents. In accordance with their responses, they were urged to join a particular group, or seek certain services. The priorities expressed by residents in order of need were: 1) jobs; 2) housing; 3) schooling. Many requests were made for increased educational and recreational programs.

Several new groups were started by the neighborhood workers, and some older, inactive ones were reactivated. It has been estimated that in this area, 25 block clubs, 20 groups working on specific issues, and 10 youth groups were in existence. UPO staff attends about 75 percent of these meetings; some of the groups go it alone. Representatives of the block clubs and other groups are delegates to the CAC.

Action involving demonstrations, sit-ins, picketing, and letter writing has been taken concerning welfare (against the "man in the house" policy);

employment (trying to change hiring practices with regard to individuals with police records); and school improvement.

Services have been provided in the fields of employment, housing, education, health, recreation, and police-citizen relations. It is the opinion of the NDP Director that these services enabled the project to reach out and thus were essential to the project. A contrary opinion was expressed by a staff member to the effect that provision of services inhibited the development of community action programs.

From the point of view of resident involvement in community action, probably the two most effective projects are in the South East and in the Cardozo area.

The contracting agency in South East is a settlement house which had developed and retained ties with poor people. Residents rallied to do battle on specific issues: they were ready to testify, demonstrate, write, and picket.

By way of contrast, Cardozo's Project Three stressed group process and involvement. Operated by UPO directly, staff training and planning activity had as its objective the building of a viable organization which would continue to function after professional staff had left. Plans have been formulated to shift the operation from UPO sponsorship to a local group.

Approximately 500 residents were involved in the program. Attendance hovered around the 120 mark. Committees, assisted by neighborhood workers, have developed a reasonable degree of know-how. About 7 committees meet weekly with an average attendance of 10 to 12. Twenty-five indigenous workers service about 20 block clubs, of which 10 are new, plus other organizations in the area.

The question of the relative merits of centralization and decentralization are posed by the neighborhood center structure. Three centers in the Cardozo area (One, Two and Three), inherited from Washington Action for Youth, are run directly by UPO staff. In all other areas, the Neighborhood Development Project was contracted out: one to the Urban League; two to settlement houses; still others to new groups formed specifically for the purpose of operating the UPO program. Reflecting the fact that the target area included numbers of middle class residents was the Far North East where well-organized civic groups took the initiative and became the contracting agents. In another instance, responsibilities were divided between a contracting organization and an established settlement house.

The Project administration feels that contracting out to new groups encourages the development of program in the direction called for by UPO. When contracts are held by established groups, they are likely to follow ongoing modes of operation which may be difficult to alter. It also placates local power groups, which view the establishing of the NDP as a threat.

Boundaries and modes of operation have been influenced by UPO's evolving approach; by the level of organization and characteristics of a particular neighborhood; the existence of established groups with their territory already carved out; and, in a few cases, by a natural physical divider. Consequently, differences have emerged in sponsorship, staffing, styles of work, and program emphases. As one staff member put it: "Each center is like a city unto itself."

Examination of the performance of the various NDPs indicates that no firm rule can be drawn regarding workable structure. Substance, rather than form, appears the decisive factor.

The variety of methods used by NDPs makes it possible for the local project center to take special problems into consideration. The autonomous nature of the NDP facilitates a high degree of sensitivity to local characteristics and needs. Residents may tend to participate more readily and exercise greater control.

Another view is that the smaller a unit of operation, the more limited its objectives and accomplishments. But some issues call for city-wide programs with all available resources coordinated to maximize impact. In short, centralized efforts are needed to deal with functional issues.

The position of the community organizers is a delicate one. Confusion exists as to the role of the UPO-employed community coordinator in relation to NDP staff. It becomes essentially advisory when the lines of accountability flow from NDP Director to the CAC. There is thus no guarantee of coordination on a city-wide scale. And further complications occur when conservative elements control the CAC in any particular neighborhood. Project directors may then be unable to work with UPO staff as closely as the local situation demands.

The Youth Organization

Young people from a small neighborhood in the South East area organized themselves with the aim of developing a youth movement. This group, predominantly Negro, began to press for a grant from UPO. They called themselves the "Rebels with a Cause."

Although their request was refused at first, they persisted. With adult assistance, they rewrote their proposal, and were able to submit a satisfactory one. With the granting of funds, they were able to branch out. A youth board was elected and volunteer leaders were salaried.

The leaders feel this organization encompasses a representative cross-section of youth from the area. They indicate contact with about 1000 young people ranging in age from 10–21, in relation to recreational and educational programs. The group organizes picnics, games, and sports for young people. Its expressed goal is to help youngsters in trouble. An indication of how the community regards them was observed when a public school teacher telephoned to ask the group's assistance in removing acting-out youngsters from school grounds.

No similar development has taken place among youth in the other areas. The reason why a self-generated youth movement started in this neighborhood only is unclear. Yet these Negro youth constitute a key segment of the entire UPO target population.

As always, the relationship between the adults and youth is a delicate matter. The youth feel that the adults, represented by UPO and their NDP Board, did not help them get started as much as they might have. More important, perhaps, is whether or not the youth will be permitted enough autonomy to feel free to pursue their own path in their own way, independent of adult approaches and techniques. Youth staff, in particular, will be susceptible to influence by adult patterns, pressures, and needs.

Credit Unions and Consumer Education

A credit union is a self-help organization involving residents, not only for the specific purpose for which it is organized, but on an informal, neighborly basis. All have consumer education programs and attempt to reach out into the community. In fact, contacts have even been developed with prisoners who are enabled to save through the unions and thus maintain ties with their neighborhoods.

An interesting phenomenon of the UPO program is the popularity of the credit union. In 1962, when UPO came into being, there was only one credit union in the city oriented toward the poor. It was under the auspices of a Catholic neighborhood house. Subsequently it was assisted by UPO, which provided funds for rent, staff, and supplies. Then, as each NDP Center opened, a credit union soon followed.

Today, 2500–3000 people belong to credit unions in the target area, most of which are owned and run by the poor. Store fronts are utilized, monthly meetings are conducted, and elections are held. The relationship with the UPO is essentially contractual. A number of public assistance recipients are active and the welfare department has agreed to allow them to take loans under certain circumstances.

Credit union programs illustrate the interplay of educational, service, and community organization elements. The credit unions, preaching thrift, refer residents to their consumer education programs on budgeting, purchasing, and other consumer problems.

Another type of program growing out of credit union activity has been direct action. For example, residents in a Cardozo area consumer education program picketed a market and inspected other neighborhood stores. They also alerted credit unions to alleged discriminatory criteria used by banks in making loans to Negroes.

Through the credit unions, as in other community organization helf-help efforts, latent complaints were articulated, new demands expressed, feelings of belonging enhanced, and community organization aims furthered.

The Project and the Community

In searching for the soundest organizational structure for community action, UPO shifted its approach from a geographic basis (census tracts) to a functional one. It was the UPO experience that groupings organized around functions (such as housing, employment, welfare, education, and police relations) were more productive than block associations.

When early attempts were made to improve housing conditions, the emphasis was on the provision of services. Consultation, emergency requests, and use of legal services for defensive purposes such as evictions dominated. Block clubs carried on protests through such measures as letter-writing and speaking up at zoning hearings. They called for examination of the housing records and for code enforcement. Area-wide activity reinforced the campaigns of the smaller units. Protests to the National Capitol Housing Authority had been made in the main by small groups. Despite some UPO assistance, the NDP Centers had not been able to do much on their own beyond clean-up campaigns and talking to landlords.

A dramatic indication of the shifting emphasis was the creation of a city-wide tenants union, made up of public housing tenants, geared to challenge the housing authority. Here, questions are raised and demands put forward regarding maintenance, utility charges, rodent control, repairs, and increments. Five or six meetings have taken place, attended by as many as 600 people.

In March 1966, recognizing the need for additional assistance in the housing field, UPO began to employ specialized staff. A full-time worker has the responsibility of developing the housing campaign on a city-wide scale; a number of housing advisors are also being hired.

Similar developments are taking place with reference to the welfare issue. NDP Centers had been giving "one-shot help" by giving advice and negotiating for clients. Since the Spring of 1966, welfare committees in each NDP area have been meeting weekly to handle complaints. Some of these autonomous committees are represented on the CACs; others are CAC subcommittees. Plans for ongoing committees are being made in the hope that there will be no interruption of service should professional staff become unavailable.

With UPO assistance, movement here is from local action and a service emphasis, toward a viable city-wide organization and a more inclusive community action approach. A welfare coordinator has been hired to train staff, teach clients to negotiate the system, give direction, and play a community organization role. The Welfare Alliance was formed as a representative city-wide association. It is taking policy positions as well as making known the rights of welfare recipients. The Alliance is also directing pressure toward appropriate Congressional committees.

Many of the protests are against restrictive residence requirements, the "man-in-the-house" rule, night raids, and inadequate grants. Significantly, the names of the participants are not recorded because of fear of retaliation.

Shifting activities to a different level, as in the two examples cited, produces new stresses and strains on the community organization apparatus. Local residents do not automatically grasp the relevance of the larger issues or community-wide organizations.

At the time of this writing, two contrary trends, under debate on a national level, are developing in UPO. On the one hand, directives from the funding sources point toward contracting out with greater decentralization (in which case, UPO will cease to be an operating agency). On the other hand, to mount programs which will successfully move large city agencies toward meeting the needs of the poor, a concentrated, centralized effort is required.

Generic difficulties inherent in attempting to bring about social change impel the change agents toward broader definitions of the issues, toward engaging larger political units, and toward an increased use of outside expertise. This trend, however, does not nullify grass-roots participation and initiative. Rather it is an outgrowth of it.

CHAPTER V:

HOUSTON ACTION FOR YOUTH, HOUSTON, TEXAS

Project Genesis

From its conception as a research and demonstration project, with support from the Office of Juvenile Delinquency,[17] to its present status as a community action project under the Office of Economic Opportunity,[18] Houston Action for Youth (HAY) has seen itself primarily as a self-help neighborhood organization. The major thrust of what the project calls one of its core programs has been attempting the organization of neighborhood residents into democratically controlled self-help groups. It was hypothesized that this would create structural controls which would inhibit delinquent acts by youth. Such a program was also seen as altering social welfare services so that the agencies could better serve deviant youth.

HAY sees itself as providing ongoing neighborhood organization support. As conceived originally, the project was to be of limited duration. In its initial request for funding, it stated that one of the targets of neighborhood development was the agency itself; upon successful neighborhood organization, HAY would no longer have any purpose. This objective has been set aside. It is now assumed that neighborhood organization requires the continuous sponsorship of an ongoing agency in the same way that other social welfare programs (i.e., case work, group work) require such sponsorship. It is generally believed that if HAY withdrew from the community, the expected carry-over would not be strong enough to sustain the neighborhood groups.

The Target Area

The target area is widely dispersed, yet densely populated compared with other sections of Houston. It consists of a number of distinct neighborhoods divided by formidable barriers such as superhighways, and industrial complexes, which are rarely, if ever, crossed by the local residents. Dwellings are nearly all single-story and one-family. Children, some naked and uncared for, play between rows of inadequate, ramshackle houses. Neighborhood residents share the streets with the vehicles, noises, vapors and wastes of heavy industry. Within this single ghetto complex, there are affluent Negro families living in modern brick dwellings as ample as those in any suburban community; and virtually alongside are 10 one-room shacks occupying the same amount or less land than a single modern house. In the same neighborhood live middle-class business and white collar workers and the chronically unemployed.

Recruitment for neighborhood organizations concentrated on residents who had time to devote to such activities. As can be expected, active participants thus represent the stable working class of the ghetto. In contrast, adults and youth who participate in HAY service programs are drawn more heavily from the lowest socio-economic strata of the target community. "Clients," then, are lower class; "participants" appear to be upwardly mobile. Staff describes the neighborhood organization program as stronger in the north quarter, the more stable section, of the community. In a sense, the project starts where the community is by drawing on its apparent strengths and resources.

Goals and Assumptions

A strong process orientation is articulated by the agency staff and is evident in various printed materials prepared by the project. It is accompanied by a relative lack of emphasis on goals. Self determination and self expression are seen as determining program. Agency policy calls for no decision until a group itself decides where it wants to go and how it wants to get there. This process orientation, as opposed to goal orientation, is of central importance because it affects the ideology of the agency, how its staff is trained, and the general direction of its program.

The original HAY proposal, and much of the subsequent printed material developed by the project, designate structural change as a basic aim of the neighborhood organization. In apparent contradiction, a top HAY administrator has stated that the objective of the program is "to go back to the grass roots and educate the people . . . . [so long as] the people are satisfied to rent these shabby houses, to work for these low wages, etc., the problem cannot be solved. The landlord doesn't care, the employer doesn't care. If segregation is eliminated, the integrated community will still suffer from immorality, gambling and the like if the people are not educated."[19] He also stated that any person who is unemployed in Houston is so as a result of his own lack of willingness to work since anyone can get a job there today. The heavy onus put upon individual slum dwellers in this statement appears to preclude the usefulness of structural change to which the project is formally committed.

Modes of Organization

As indicated earlier, staff views the HAY neighborhood development program as organized around the cause of self expression on the part of the people. Organization is not undertaken on the basis of a specific issue or the provision of a specific service. Project staff emphasizes slow, steady, consistent organization rather than "easy efforts to organize people for one-shot demonstrations."[20] Great pride is taken in the fact that there were no HAY members three years ago, whereas now there are 3500; that three years ago there were no groups, and now there are 100 organized. The program sees this development as a result of uninterrupted neighborhood organization service to the community.

Neighborhood Groups

The project has met the problem of diversity of population and the widespread target area by organizing a large number of small neighborhood groups which are brought together through the representative machinery described below.

HAY staff is wary of self-contained groups, i.e., those unrelated to the project, viewing them as not interested in the overall community, but rather in their own vested point of view. No group which is affiliated with a larger national organization is part of the HAY network. Project policy is to work *around* such groups since it chooses not to work *with* them.

Each HAY group is assigned a staff worker. Decisions are made through three area councils to which 100 separate neighborhood groups send representatives. These area councils send representatives to an Inter-Neighborhood Council which meets monthly and chooses representatives to the HAY Board of Directors. The Inter-Neighborhood Council is considered the central planning body for the target area.

The project has succeeded in instituting a series of neighborhood center programs with activity centers in the tradition of the settlement movement. Stressing recreation, these centers involve upwardly mobile elements of the ghetto in planning decisions, setting committee schedules, and decorating and renovating the center.

Individual neighborhood groups have undertaken a variety of activities. For example, a petition was made for stop signs at a dangerous street crossing.

HAY staff believes that such qualities as endurance, persistence, and dignity are needed by petitioners if grievances are to be effectively redressed. HAY believes that direct confrontation with local government can easily be deflected, will have no lasting results, and is therefore not effective. HAY encourages its councils to make use of prescribed resources for the redress of grievances. The project feels that, beyond this, it cannot be involved in protest action. For example, a neighborhood group exerted efforts to cause the city to change a plan for constructing an incinerator in its area. Using the usual means of communication with the city, the residents' grievances were initially ignored by city personnel. However, under the direction of project staff, the group returned to present its case at 4 consecutive city council meetings. The dignity, persistence, and the informed status of these representatives impressed the mayor and city council. Although the decision on the incinerator was not rescinded, city officials did recognize the group and acknowledge its petition. This model for action, while not relieving the problem, provides the basis for future amicable, cooperative relations between the neighborhood group and the city. It is seen as more efficacious than militant public action which may also fail to redress the grievance and, in addition, alienate the city administration.

Staff Training and Role

HAY's neighborhood organization staff is presently composed of 15 local residents who have had no specific experience or training in organizational work. Such residents are recruited from among the more affluent, rather than the most impoverished, ghetto dwellers. After recruitment, staff is trained by project administrative and supervisory staff for three months. Great emphasis is placed on this training which is painstaking and exacting (eight staff members were dropped during the training period). The project director would like to see trained social workers employed to act as supervisors for untrained personnel.

Project supervisors relate great difficulty in locating suitable candidates. The qualifications they seek are "college or graduate training; a strong personality; and a strong, positive commitment to HAY."

Project administration refers to the training program as "retraining" or "training to learn to work our way." The training program attempts to help staff become "skillfully subservient to the persons [neighborhood residents] they are serving."

The ongoing supervision of the 15 neighborhood organizers is the responsibility of the project director of neighborhood organization. In addition, he has informal lines of communication with each of the 100 neighborhood groups in the project. Highly efficient feedback, through a variety of informal channels, funnels into the project through these many contacts.

The director regards this communication as "structured and official" rather than informal, evidence that "the people want to do a job and want to do it right" and that they recognize that "guidance and the know-how of how to do a job comes from the project. . . . [Since staff is] working for the people, no one is ever out of place keeping their eyes open and their ears to the ground and communicating what they find to the neighborhood organization director." Project administration refers to such communications as "lines of trust."

This approach is presented to neighborhood organizers during the initial training period. It is made clear that staff is expected to "name names" and, in turn, to be confronted with exact statements of others. A neighborhood organizer reports that staff finds this system of feedback congenial. According to administration, "They love it, it keps them on their toes. . . . If they are not professional enough to take it, they move out. . . . If you cannot be an organizer and work with the people, then you can take a program job and play with the people."

Training and modes of organization make considerable demands on the neighborhood organization staff. Although much is asked of them, they are highly regarded by the project and considered to be its most important personnel. In turn, the neighborhood organizer provides a kind of charismatic leadership usually found only in spontaneous social or political movements.

Project staff demonstrate a zeal and sense of mission which keeps them at their tasks continually. This *esprit de corps* is functional to the extent that it enhances the action program. It is dysfunctional to the extent that it causes HAY staff to reject relevant information and experiences from nonlocal sources.

A brief review of the local social service structure shows a dearth of programs for the impoverished. In contrast, HAY champions the cause of "the people." Partisanship for the client group is used to justify actions even when appropriately taken on the basis of agency self interest, in the name of *the people*.

In contrast to policy statements about decision making on the part of the people, in day-to-day practice, HAY takes the position that there is a limit to the extent to which residents can make their own decisions; that there is a point where the power of the people must be curbed, because an agency such as HAY has a responsibility to the *total community*. If neighborhood groups undertake activities which are contrary, or detrimental, to the purposes of the parent organization, the agency withdraws its support. In actuality, this has happened only once.

According to the administration, the infrequency of such an event is due to the project's emphasis on careful organization. No decisions are made by neighborhood groups until they are ready. When they appreciate the responsibilities of citizenship, participants can make proper decisions in their own behalf.

Because the people are seen as the basic source of power and because the project regards its own program and approach with a great deal of confidence, there is a tendency on the part of staff to consider any difficulties which arise as a result of misleadership by power-hungry people. Where such dissidence occurs, project staff strategy is to "provide the necessary time to let the people destroy the false organization."

The fact that the target area doubled in size, and that HAY moved to meet the changing requirements of different funding sources, in part accounts for the continuing confusion regarding the process of self determination.

Various programs introduced into the target area have been determined first by the availability of funds, second by community self selection. To assure that the people's needs and the provisions of the funding legislation coincide, the activities of the organizers, especially of top project staff, have been strongly directive. The neighborhood organizer takes on a role the administration describes as "the architect." He acts as a technician who places what the people want to do in the perspective of a formal framework. It is the staff who determine that the expressed desire of local residents to be better parents is an expression of interest in a program of family life education.

An example of strong leadership (as contrasted with projects where staff take a less directive role) was demonstrated at an Inter-Neighborhood Council meeting. Various project staff presented all items on the agenda. A staff member prompted the chairman and at several points wrote out what he should say; he also cued the secretary and led the applause. It appeared that the agenda had been prepared by staff with no involvement of members. Had the staff member not been present, the meeting could not have been conducted.

It was a quest for programmatic autonomy which caused Northside Action for Youth (NAY) to split off from HAY. NAY was the first neighborhood organization formed by the project. It was made up of the same kinds of stable working class people as those who continued in the project.

This issue of independent action by HAY neighborhood groups has since come up a number of times.

The Project and Community Institutions

It is to be expected that dissident groups will spring up in the wake of any new organization. In the case of HAY, these groups fall into 3 main categories: the welfare community; the resident community; and the academic-liberal community. Many issues between these groups and the project are organizational, stemming from the desire to expand or protect jurisdiction. The ideological issues tend to cluster around activism vs. rehabilitation; some issues have developed around personality clashes with project staff.

The addition of HAY to the Houston social welfare family has had many consequences. Project administration suggests that HAY's involvement with the Office of Manpower, Automation, and Training (OMAT) provided this government agency an opportunity to exert pressure on the Bureau of Employment Security and the local employment commission. Such pressure facilitated the inception of new programs for youth under the Manpower Development Training Act (MDTA) and the Bureau of Apprenticeship Training (BAT). Neighborhood-based youth programs, under the aegis of the employment commission, were created in response to the implied threat of the highly successful neighborhood-based programs started under HAY auspices. Local planning efforts have also encouraged the U.S. Department of Labor to offer new programs in the neighborhood. For example, a full employment project, Outreach, is now located in the HAY target area.

As a direct result of HAY activities, the project director feels the Houston Independent School District Board has altered its policy of refusing Federal funds. The School Board asked HAY to cosponsor a Headstart program and suggested using the project as fiscal agent so that the Board could avoid its own anti-Federal fund policy. The School Board chairman, a member of the HAY Board of Directors, engaged in extensive behind-the-scenes negotiations on a board-to-board level. There was often agreement, before the fact, as to the form and substance of a particular action.

Although neighborhood residents were involved in recruiting children, assistant teachers, and volunteers, the effort was basically directed toward working with community elites. In this instance, HAY even moved out of its target area to program for selected schools all over the city. Having broken its precedent on the use of Federal funds, School Board policy appears to be reversed.

A number of community and social work agencies have currently undertaken to provide service programs to local residents under contract with HAY. These agencies are now serving heretofore unreached clients.

Project staff affirm that HAY neighborhood organization efforts have produced a climate which discourages delinquent behavior. There are no base lines on which to make *before* and *after* comparisons because statistical data on the incidence of delinquency are not available. However, project administration states that "it is the people who say that it is different now." They cite a number of anecdotes in support of this contention, such as fights between youth stopped by local residents. Offered as additional evidence are phenomena such as local residents cooperating with the police, seeking assistance from them, and appearing as witnesses in court cases.

Some skepticism may be in order. Although deviance appears modified in the original youth in the project who have grown up and moved out, new youth growing up in the target area continue to manifest the same problems. Intervention focused on structure would produce changes in these youth entering preadolescence as well as adolescents. A recurrence of deviant developmental patterns would seem to support the view that rehabilitation devices have focused on individuals rather than on structure.

As the project has evolved, it has moved toward the direct provision of services to the neighborhood community. This is in contrast to its original social change orientation, and is also in keeping with the general HAY emphasis on process rather than the achievement of specific goals.

CHAPTER VI: ACTION FOR APPALACHIAN YOUTH, CHARLESTON, W. VA.

Project Genesis

The Charleston Youth Community, Inc. (CYC), the predecessor of Action for Appalachian Youth, Inc. (AAY), had as its objective the formulating and implementing of a demonstration program for Kanawha County youth. The County covers over 900 square miles and encompasses a population of about 250 thousand. The Charleston area constitutes a fairly prosperous industrial complex; the rest of the County has not been able to make a satisfactory transition from coal mining. Roughly 9000 people were employed in coal mining in 1947; by 1962, the figure had dropped to 3200 and is probably considerably less at the present time.

Approximately one-third of the County's residents live in Charleston; one-third in other urban areas in the County; the remaining third are rural dwellers, nearly all of whom live along creek banks, deep-winding hollows, or on mountain ridges. It is in these rural areas that a variety of youth problems occur.

What was seen as most crucial "in the emergence of problems in Kanawha County is a malfunction of the relationship which exists between the individual or group and the social system in which they must operate. Problems arise from the nature of this relationship rather than from inherent characteristics of either." [21] The basic concept advanced the view that the culture conflict between industrialized, urban society and the rural, hollow folk was the source of the difficulty. There is a ". . . . particular kind of malfunction of the social system; lack of meshing between the ways that sizable numbers of people do things and the social arrangements by means of which people contribute to and draw from the resources of the community."

This bilateral lack of knowledge, understanding, and skill between the hollow folk and the general community leads to failure of interactions, with lack of resources and power on one side producing impotence, vulnerability, and alienation.

"If . . . a large part of the delinquent behavior in Kanawha County is associated with the cultural conflict of rural youth migrating to urban areas, then it is clear that intervention strategies must be directed toward the total community." The source of the difficulty was thus broadened from discrepant cultures to one of "total community."

The Target Area

The following passages from the CYC proposal pinpoint some of the unique characteristics of the Appalachian region:

> "The Charleston Youth Community is developing programs under conditions quite distinct from those known to previous researchers in delinquency. The territory to be reached is vast, consisting of communities isolated by mountains, ridges, creeks, rivers without bridges, and roads which are little more than cowpaths. The other side of the mountain is often reached only after the most strenuous, prolonged drive or hike, and in many instances it is a simple statement of fact that 'you can't get there from here.'
>
> Nor is the terrain the only unique factor. Public and private services have been organized in piece-meal fashion or not organized at all; facilities which are taken for granted in even the most depressed urban slum simply do not exist in many areas. One small community might have a good school and even access to a doctor, while an adjoining one—cut off by an impassable road, perhaps might have no school at all, no health services, not even elementary sanitation.
>
> The people, too, are distinct. Over the long years of isolation, these sons and daughters of Old American stock have developed patterns of behavior and traits of character which make them as difficult to reach as their Hollows. Some have given up hope, resigned to lives of dependency and despondency. Others struggle to support their families, but failure is inevitable when education and skill are both lacking. An air of depression and pessimism hangs low over many communities. Most of those who can, get out. We are dealing with those who cannot or do not leave, and with those who, having left, return because they could not succeed in the world outside. These are not people with a boundless faith in what lies ahead. Even young boys and girls need to be convinced that something good is possible."

Staff designation of the program as neighborhood development, rather than community organization, indicates their appreciation of the significant differences between the AAY target area and the usual urban target area. These are further illustrated by the difficulties in finding a target area in accord with the funding source's specification of a community with homogeneous characteristics and evidence of social instability.

Since no census tracts were available, CYC attempted to use a larger unit, the magisterial districts. However, "it became apparent that because these areas are delineated by political boundaries which have little or no relationship to homogeneous groupings and therefore to program, they could not be considered as target areas." After a series of attempts to resolve this dilemma, CYC initiated census tracting of Kanawha County.

Atypical criteria had to be used in selecting a target neighborhood. These included: neighborhoods whose boundaries coincide with anticipated census tracts; those not deeply divided by major permanent factions; those in which population turnover is not so great as to damage program as a result of group membership changes.

It should be noted that while families occupy the same geographical neighborhood and share a common culture and values, there are, with the possible exception of a few churches, no formal organizations and few opportunities for experience in joint action. Even within the churches, the lack of formal organization, the prevalence of factionalism, and a highly individualized approach toward church affairs, do not allow for continuity or opportunities for sustained, meaningful leadership.

There were two ways in which the strong revivalist and fundamentalist trend proved to be negative factors. One stemmed from a fatalism which ruled out purposeful human planning and action ("Whatever the Lord has willed, will be.") An extreme example is the ritual whereby a snake is brought into a religious ceremony to see whether or not it will bite. In one hollow a death resulted, precipitating a community furor.

Secondly, some religious segments frown on youth activities such as dancing or similar types of socializing. In one hollow, the charge that AAY sponsored activities constituted a den of iniquity had to be withdrawn by the accusing minister because of public pressure.

Competing organizations did exist, however, in the urban area. The Triangle District in Charleston had a close relationship with a council of about 15 civil rights organizations which tended to be more aggressive on many issues of concern to the Negro population of the city and county. They engaged in joint activities in some instances, such as the "don't sell your vote" campaign.

Cleavages in some hollows stemmed from actual class differences; that is, middle class elements were present. The more articulate leadership here tended to move to the fore and dominate the newly formed improvement associations to be discussed later. In other hollows, the middle class groupings were not present. Consequently, a division of much less significance—those working and those on welfare—provided a basis for distinguishing between segments of the population. In hollows where 70 to 80 percent of the total population are recipients of public assistance, the usual concepts of stratification lose much of their meaning.

Distinctions exist in degree rather than in kind between the hillbilly farming areas and the even more disorganized former mining areas. People from the close-in hollow areas, living on the fringes of the city and satisfying their needs in the city, are still in conflict with city ways, rules, and regulations. The Charleston inner city areas, on the other hand, possess the usual characteristics of the urban slum.

Goals and Strategies

The lack of a clear goal perspective was evidenced early in the project when project staff asked: Toward what kind of change do we intend to influence the target population? To full membership in the urban middle class culture? To the development of a distinctive rural Appalachian culture combined with a measure of sophistication about functioning in the city? To a new society in which consumption and use of leisure outweigh production?

The AAY neighborhood development program has been attempting to make the target areas viable communities through bringing in additional services, developing organization, leadership, and a community identity. The strategy of intervention outlined by AAY called for: 1) "A neighborhood development element addressed primarily to needs and services of the target areas." 2) "A program development element addressed to the coverage and effectiveness of formal organizations in meeting the needs of all the people in the community." 3) "An accelerated social participation element addressed to the generation of new patterns of social processes toward the realization of a total community."

Modes of Organization

Each target hollow was assigned a neighborhood worker. He had to have a college degree, whether or not he had experience. About 80 percent of the workers were West Virginians, somewhat familiar with rural life.

Since no precedent existed, the worker's presence was difficult to explain and a lengthy get-acquainted period was to be expected. A worker usually spent several months attempting to overcome the traditional suspicion of the outsider. In some instances, the worker was perceived as a welfare representative traveling under false colors; in others, as a politician with a plan up his sleeve. Some mothers proceeded to scrub their youngsters to make a favorable impression on the alleged welfare representative. When the worker was eventually invited to stay for the evening, it signified that, to a degree, suspicion had given way to acceptance.

After appropriate exploration and discussion, the question of having a community meeting was raised by the worker. Residents asked the worker what he was going to do; the worker responded by asking what they were dissatisfied with and what they thought they might do about it.

The primary issue raised by residents was the need for improved roads. Many of the back roads are impassable at certain times of the year, completing the isolation of the hollows. Recreational needs were also mentioned frequently and understandably, since many of the young people had no facilities whatsoever. Other concerns included education, community centers, clean-ups, youth programs, drainage, and housing.

A community improvement association usually evolved from these meetings and discussions. It elected its officers, set up committees along functional lines, met on a regular basis, and pursued one or more issues by sending delegations to officials and circulating petitions.

The demands put forth by the community improvement associations, in the main, were those around which the entire neighborhood might unite because the issues affected them.

In half a dozen or so cases, the neighborhoods were able to obtain the use of the abandoned one-room school houses for the rent of $1 per year from the local school board. As more services were introduced by AAY, the school not only served as a meeting place for the improvement association, but also as the locale for adult education classes, a library, preschool groups, and youth clubs.

Many fund-raising events, such as hot dog, rummage, and apple butter sales, provided funds for purchasing equipment for playgrounds and laying out a park. At times, building supplies were solicited outside the community and the residents supplied the labor.

In one hollow, a movement has begun toward developing profit-making enterprises on a cooperative basis. A worm farm has been started and plans have been made for the production of green beans, the marketing of unique Appalachia jams and jellies, the establishment of a confectionery and concession stand. While these ventures may be viewed as a source of supplementary income, they cannot be considered an answer to the absence of job-producing industry. Opportunities outside the hollows are drawing away the able young people, leaving the older residents and the children.

To be meaningful, local plans have to be part of broader county, state, and national plans to revitalize depressed areas. Without utilizing more advanced social planning concepts, renewed and continued disillusionment and defeatism in the hollows is quite probable.

An achievement, such as having a section of road repaired, constitutes a major victory in a community where people had not combined for common cause as far back as they could remember. Encouraged by the first success, enthusiasm grows and new proposals for action are suggested. After two years, a hollow may wind up with a functioning community association, a community center with educational and recreational activities, a new playground, road improvements, better school busing, or similar gains.

Each neighborhood improvement association sent two delegates to a council which functioned on a county scale. Potentially, this group could develop campaigns on a county scale around such issues as improved welfare services and transportation. It has not yet been able to do this, in part because many of the delegates have not been able to broaden their horizons beyond their hollow. Their participation is affected by identification with their locality. Yet it is in this delegated body that proposals can be brought forward and demands pressed for institutional change. This would mean that the community would no longer be forced to present complaints on a case by case basis.

The AAY Board of Directors attempts to act as mobilizer and coordinator of social welfare activities for the county. A board committee has been set up to explore economic matters on a county scale. If a feasible, specific plan is formulated, it could serve as a rallying point for those seeking social change in and out of the hollows. Its implementation, or partial implementation, could be an unifying goal of AAY and its allies in Kanawha County.

Neighborhood people were chosen to participate on the board in January 1965. The full integration of these new board members has yet to be accomplished. It has become increasingly difficult for the board to attract a quorum at its meetings. This may be the result of factors inherent in the target area, such as a highly diverse community located in impassable terrain and populated by persons of widely disparate ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Staff Utilization

The role of the neighborhood worker advanced by CYC and AAY in the original proposals, in training sessions, and in ongoing supervision, was of a nonintervening, nondirective worker, working with the entire community. This approach is linked to the project picture of the community as a homogeneous entity.

This model was functional in the early get-acquainted period. But as varied conditions and personalities evolved, pressures began to grow, forcing workers to question the feasibility of this model under all circumstances.

One worker posed this dilemma: a more middle-class grouping in his neighborhood assumed control of the improvement association and excluded the most deprived. Accepting the nondirective definition of his role, the worker was at a loss as to how to change the situation. Another worker faced with a similar problem reported she simply told the leaders that since they did not need her and others did, she was going to go down the road to start a competing organization. Those in control quickly responded.

With individuals and families requiring assistance, the worker assumed a direct-help stance from the start in regard to locating jobs, providing medical aid and legal assistance. Since the poorly educated, isolated residents are incapable of dealing with the institutions of welfare, education, health, and law, as advances are made toward introducing services, the worker must increasingly assume the role of advocate.

The impartial worker from the outside, together with a positive program, in many instances helped minimize and overcome long-standing factional family divisions and differences. The tenacity of these individual and family arguments, leading to refusals to socialize or cooperate over a long period of time, are undoubtedly products of the ingrown, narrow, intensely personal character of the mountaineer society. Regardless of the origin, the neighborhood worker had to deal with this phenomenon to bring about the unity necessary for neighborhood development.

The Stereotype Refuted

The Appalachian people are reputedly fiercely independent and individualistic. It is said that their lives have been run by the coal companies, the union, and the welfare department, in that order. It is also commonly held that the mountaineers are incapable of organization and action on their own behalf (despite their history as union participants).

As one observer writes: "These folks are nonsocial, recognizing no social compact beyond the basis of personal friendship—and even so, each is still suspicious of all the others. One of our staff workers who lived fourteen years in a small rural community says that only now are some of these families beginning to have enough confidence in her to speak freely of personal matters and ask her counsel. They are virtually impossible to organize into groups and are traditionalistic in the extreme."[22]

By and large, this has not been the experience of the neighborhood workers. One of their most significant contributions has been to show that, given the proper motivation, hollow residents, like other people, can be organized and activated.

Of equal significance has been the heightened social interaction; the breaking down of individual and family barriers; the shifting attitudes of the people in regard to themselves and the outside world—in other words, the possibility of developing a new identity.

That culture conflict was the source of the difficulty of Appalachia was the original premise upon which the AAY project was based. Although this concept has been broadened and modified, it still dominates programs the project has developed. Despite the neighborhood organizers' successes, perplexing questions persist. What can be done to alleviate culture conflict in the absence of an economy? Should the hollows be buttressed as sociopolitical entities if there is no possibility of developing a viable economic structure in them? The question as to whether or not the hollows can or should be sustained has not yet been resolved.

Certainly the urban slum which is an alternate mode of social organization is not a desirable one. The problems of Appalachia will require distinctive solutions. The model to be sought lies in the experience of a project like the Tennessee Valley Authority rather than projects created to solve the problems of the large urban industrial slum. Community organization programs need to develop in conjunction with TVA-type service programs geared to rural electrification and small farm agricultural techniques. Social action should be developed to restore the natural resources of a ravaged land. Such programs will be more suited to the southern mountain region because they will reflect its distinctive needs.

CHAPTER VII: HARYOU-ACT, NEW YORK, N.Y.

Project Genesis

The plans of several New York City agencies to extend psychiatric counseling service programs to the Harlem community in 1961 led to protests by neighborhood groups and leaders working within the framework of a community council association. The objections stemmed from the fact that no Harlem agency had been consulted or involved in the planning of these programs.

Opposition to this arbitrary imposition of programs from outside agencies led to negotiations with city officials. This, in turn, initiated a chain of events which ultimately resulted in planning grants by the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and New York City, and eventually led to the formation of Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited—Associated Community Teams (HARYOU—ACT).

The protest is significant in that it identifies and illuminates the position of Negro communities; it reflects the resentment of segments of the community to being "constantly ignored politically, economically, and educationally,"—and, in essence to being the recipients of what has been called "social work colonialism." [23]

Youth in the Ghetto, the proposal submitted as the blueprint for HARYOU-ACT, has as its subtitle, *A Study of the Consequences of Powerlessness and a Blueprint for Change*. The Harlem ghetto is viewed as the "institutionalization of powerlessness." The youth of Harlem, and of the many Harlems throughout the nation, are designated as the "victims of the institutionalized cruelties and blockages of American racism."

The existence of the ethnic or racist component adds a profoundly complicating dimension to the already difficult social problems of delinquency, poverty, and power. Any consideration of HARYOU-ACT's philosophy, policies, programs, its hopes, successes, and failures, must take cognizance of it.

The Target Area

Approximately a quarter of a million people—94 percent of them Negro—are crowded into the three-and-a-half square miles that constitute central Harlem. Half of the young people here, under 18 years of age, live with one or no parents.

Deteriorated housing, disproportionately low incomes, a captive market, predominantly marginal businesses, emigration of leadership, inferior services and facilities, daytime influx of white persons in authority, and outside control are evidences of a ghetto situation. As cited in *Youth in the Ghetto,* Harlem, compared with New York City as a whole, has twice the juvenile delinquency rate, roughly 8 times the drug addiction rate, twice the infant mortality rate.

The ethnic ghetto, within the core city and surrounded by white suburbs, is becoming increasingly characteristic of metropolitan areas throughout the country. Freedom of movement for the minority is severely circumscribed. Imposed residential segregation connotes not only difference but inferiority, and serves as a further stimulus to prejudice. Separation also fosters group streotyping.

The minority group reacts to such debilitating social conditions with a variety of individual and group responses. The pressures tend to generate dysfunctional patterns among many of the youth which include immobility, apathy, dependency, indifference, defeatism, "slicksterism," random hostility, suspicion, and self-hatred. The data accumulated by HARYOU-ACT ". . . lead to the conclusion that the youth of Harlem, delinquent and nondelinquent alike, are profoundly alienated from the world that made them." Delinquent youth often become hustlers, junkies, or winos. Nondelinquent youth may become beatniks, nationalists, or intense religious enthusiasts. "The largest category of the alienated however . . . are out of school, out of work and apathetically awaiting a bleak adulthood."

Goals, Assumptions, and Strategy

HARYOU-ACT's stated goals are "increasing the chances for effective and creative lives for the masses of youth in the Harlem community" and "developing Harlem into a community of excellence."

Since delinquency is considered a symptom of social pathology, any plan for youth which does not seek to engage and change a significant segment of the community would be unrealistic.

The following are HARYOU-ACT's explicit assumptions regarding reducing pathology by altering the environment: 1) antisocial behavior reflects an attempt to obtain recognition and status when socially acceptable goals are blocked; 2) discrimination and segregation function as barriers to upward mobility; 3) forces which contribute to antisocial behavior can be identified, ameliorated, and removed; 4) forces which contribute to socially acceptable behavior can be reinforced; 5) a deprived community is capable of mobilizing itself to bring about change.

The strategy for prevention and cure calls for restructuring the culture of Harlem in the hopes of getting to the roots of the problem. This strategy was chosen as opposed to immediate problem-solving.

The core of HARYOU-ACT programs, and the basis upon which any claim for innovation must be judged, is in the insistence that social action is imperative to the solution of the problems of Harlem's youth: "This approach is antithetical to the dependency-producing social services." Other HARYOU-ACT programs are subordinate to this fundamental one of stimulating initiative and social action: ". . . it would be reasonable to expect that the energies required [for social action] . . . would not then be available for antisocial and self-destructive patterns of behavior."

HARYOU-ACT decided on three vehicles to carry out this community social action program; Harlem Youth Unlimited; the Community Action Institute; and local neighborhood boards.

Modes of Organization

HARLEM YOUTH UNLIMITED (HYU) The original stated purpose of HYU was to build a youth movement "intent upon changing the culture and face of Harlem." Broad programs to attract young people from all walks of life were to be designed. It was hoped that as a result, these youth would be imbued with a sense of community, and that the character-building consequences of HYU would attract sufficient numbers of young people to weaken the deviant subcultures. This expectation of reducing the number of alienated youth was based on HYU programs with their action emphasis as well as the recruitment of youth leaders.

While HARYOU-ACT assigned trained staff to a number of programs, this was much less the case with HYU, which was initially encouraged to retain a degree of independence.

In the day-to-day operation of the program, this aim of independence was not realized. As the youth perceived this shortcoming, conflict with adult staff ensued which resulted in further restrictions on independent action. A precursor of this experience was enacted by an earlier advisory youth group of 200 called the Harlem Associates. Friction also developed here around the issue of independence. Youth blamed adult staff because the group was allowed to embark on activities without sufficient preparation on the one hand, and because it was not allowed enough freedom on the other. According to an informant, "alternation between feelings of respect, affection and loyalty, and hostility, suspicion and a contempt for the authority or competence of the adult staff, has characterized not only the youth leaders of the Associates, but also some of the rank and file members."

Although friction between the generations is generally to be expected, the cleavage here seemed to cut deeper and last longer. Youth felt used and abused; many saw themselves as simply marking time rather than becoming equipped for the future. Youth argued the issue of independence, vigorously trying to sway the administration. The question was settled by decree—HYU was to remain a department of HARYOU-ACT.

The youth, although angry, continued to participate somewhat less than wholeheartedly. As more working class or street youth joined the organization, unwillingness to accept adult direction was modified; these newcomers were less eager than the more middle-class, intellectual youth to go it alone.

At the present time, HYU structure is as follows: A Youth Coordinator and an elected Youth Mayor are directly responsible to the Program Director of HARYOU-ACT. The Youth Coordinator supervises five divisions: community action (now referred to as community organization); community service; personnel; public relations; and legal. Out of a staff total of 19, 11 are in community services; 7 are in community organization. The former act as local center directors and group leaders. Workers are assigned to housing projects, churches, a nursery, and a hospital. They also staff a coffee shop and operate a "pushcart" recreation program. Approximately 65 stipend youth and 50 youth volunteers are involved in the community action program (slightly less than in community services).

Prior to February 1966, the key position of Youth Coordinator was unoccupied. The various divisions, therefore, made their own interpretations of program and tended to go their own way. Little, if any, direction was offered by project administration. Personnel became preoccupied with organizational concerns, losing sight of the goal of building a social action youth movement. As social action receded, services moved to the fore.

How to keep youth engaged in productive activity was the most difficult task. Although a few meetings took place in an attempt to work out problems, haphazard program planning and evaluation prevailed. More recently, in an effort to overcome the defeatist mood which set in, to clarify objectives, and to bring about greater identification with HARYOU-ACT, an intensive training program was inaugurated. All stipend youth and volunteers are now asked to attend sessions for four hours a day, every day for a month. HYU is also redefining its own role. Its current objective is to develop a Harlem Youth Congress composed of representatives from the neighborhood boards, storefronts, the "Y" and other sources. The Youth Mayor will have a key liaison role between youth and the rest of the community. About six young people will be on the payroll out of the total of 29 full-time staff.

HYU experiences have helped youngsters learn to use social action techniques, to plan their actions rather than to yield to impulse.

Probably the most successful social action enterprise undertaken by HYU was its campaign to obtain toilet facilities in a large recreation area. The campaign lasted a few months and culminated in November 1965. The young people devised their own plans, wrote letters, collected signatures on petitions, and attracted a crowd of about 300 to a meeting. Other activities included: voter registration drives; demonstrations for street lights; pressuring the city to correct housing conditions; raising scholarship funds to help youngsters through college. The youth also vigorously canvassed the neighborhood for the local boards, helped register older adults for Medicare, and attempted to attract residents to weekly educational meetings at scattered points throughout Harlem.

From Fall 1965 to Summer 1966, a number of the young people thought they detected a lessening of interest in social action on the part of adults due to increasing interest in obtaining funds. They began to apply the label of "chicken" to the adults. Yet a questionnaire at the time resulted in a surprisingly large number of unsolicited responses indicating the desirability of able adult supervision.

The resolution of supervisory and structural problems would not have overcome the youth-adult conflict, ups and downs in activity, defeatism, and frustration. These probably stem, in large measure, from the gap between expectations and reality. The excitement and enthusiasm generated by a new, large-scale program and its exaggerated projections helped foster this. In the light of time and circumstances, changing the "culture of Harlem" by means of a few hundred youth is an overly ambitious goal.

Greater appreciation of the realities should have been evidenced by the program planners, such realities as: recognizing the formidable obstacles that face any social change movement; planning for the probable influence of uncontrollable external events; expecting the usual defeats and problems. Similarly, once expectation of autonomy for youth was kindled, it should not have been denied without anticipating strong negative reaction. The risk of disillusionment is great unless short and medium range achievable actions can be planned and implemented as continuous interim steps.

In addition to the usual conflicts revolving around generational differences, ideological differences played a part in the youth-adult relationships. Although observers do not agree on the extent of extreme nationalist sentiments among the affiliated youth, they concur that these feelings were much more prevalent among the young people than the adults.

The HARYOU-ACT Proposal assumed that all youth can function as a unit regardless of their position in the social structure. Experiences with the Harlem Associates in the planning stages quickly proved this fallacious. Middle class and upwardly mobile working class youth tended to exclude street corner youth; yet the former were still expected to provide leadership and assume responsibility for the less advantaged. This suggests that the HARYOU-ACT approach does not sufficiently explore the structural differentiation within the Negro community itself. For example, what are the characteristics of the various strata, their economic bases, and their inter-relationships? The project stresses racial identity while tending to minimize social class differences within the Negro group. When these differences appear among the youth, the staff refers to them as a clash of "life-styles."

COMMUNITY ACTION INSTITUTE (CAI) Recognizing that many residents are ill-equipped to engage in the kind of sustained social action that is required, HARYOU-ACT planners made provision for establishing an orientation and training center, the Community Action Institute. CAI seeks to train leaders, members, professionals, and anyone working with or interested in the program for effective community work. That it was considered important is indicated by the fact that the central staff of HARYOU-ACT was to retain responsibility for CAI's functioning, at least in the early stages. A curriculum was to be developed for studying the community, how to bring about change, and the HARYOU-ACT philosophy. Staff was to include a director and two assistants, plus five full-time professionals.

The development of CAI was sporadic and it never fully assumed its allotted functions. Only a few staff members were employed and no director was selected. Funds during this period, 1964, were drawn from the general project budget.

In its early stages, in the Summer of 1964, three types of courses were offered, and youth were paid to attend. The *Heritage* classes were designed to develop a sense of pride in the past and a feeling of identity and continuity. The *Community Action* classes discussed organizational techniques, took field trips, and tried to develop an understanding of the workings of government. The *Group Work* classes included youth who were working in neighborhood field placements as part of their work with the community services division. Thus they could bring up on-the-job problems for discussion when they needed fast answers.

From this early activity, CAI drifted into a period of inaction. Separate funding to train neighborhood board workers in April 1965 reactivated the Institute. Attendance at courses was made compulsory.

Some of the obstacles encountered by CAI reflect fundamental problems encountered by the entire project.

It was not possible to achieve the type of training originally contemplated because HARYOU-ACT did not develop a unified direction and purpose. Unity of purpose is still being sought and this temporizes the thrust of training programs. Definitive answers to many questions which arise in training—from practical programmatic issues to philosophical ones—are simply not available. (*What does HARYOU really stand for* was often the subject of debate.)

In addition, the needs of one project division, as perceived by its chief, may not be fulfilled by the course instructors whose perspective may be different. For instance, in regard to training the neighborhood workers, classes were cancelled by the Youth Coordinator who did not see their value. As mentioned earlier, HYU classes are being led by their own staff with its own curriculum.

Practical work methods, rather than theoretical, prevail generally among the untrained. Unless the content of training courses is relevant and suitable teaching techniques used, participants cannot be expected to react with any degree of interest.

NEIGHBORHOOD BOARDS Although the concept of the neighborhood boards had been advanced in *Youth in the Ghetto*, it was not until the Spring of 1965 that a formal proposal for separate funding was put forth. The boards reflected the need for some decentralization in so large a community.

Each board was to create a "true" neighborhood in its designated area and to represent a cross-section of the population, with special provision for the participation of youth. Functions were to include developing social welfare and social action programs, researching and coordinating them. Each board was also to assume the role of guardian of social services for the residents. Both lay and professional people were to be included on staff; local leaders and influential people were to be recruited. Eventually the local boards were to enter into a contractual relationship with HARYOU-ACT, which would be responsible for quality control.

Actual operation began in the Summer of 1965. Harlem was divided into 5 neighborhood board areas. This division did not reflect natural or neighborhood boundaries, but was laid out on a purely arbitrary basis. The areas were designated by numbers 1 through 5; each was to have its own board, director, and staff.

The general plan called for development of the boards in 3 phases: Phase I—surveying the community by means of canvassing, identifying, contacting leaders and organizations; Phase II—calling community meetings, holding discussions, organizing the organized, setting boundaries, designating representatives; Phase III—holding elections for board representation.

During the Summer of 1965 canvassing took place, local meetings were held, flyers were distributed, community reactions to the idea of local boards were tested, problems were identified, and staff training was attempted. The organizing activities in the 3 functioning areas bogged down in earlier stages and did not progress to the final phase of elections. No definite conclusions concerning how to organize neighborhood boards can be drawn.

According to community informants, many existing organizations perceived HARYOU-ACT as a competitor and potential threat. The concept of the neighborhood board was new and strange, and required a great deal of interpretation both to leaders of organizations and individuals. At community meetings, leaders were concerned about their representation on the boards. One of the most frequently asked questions concerned the availability of jobs. Several organizations managed to obtain a copy of HARYOU-ACT's proposal and proceeded to organize a local board which then sought recognition from a surprised HARYOU-ACT staff.

The lack of central direction, defined purpose, united policy and program was reflected in the variety of interpretations and activities in the respective board areas. One area was developing a community council type of organization. In another area, the neighborhood boundaries were changed, resulting in two boards unknowingly serving the same blocks. Two others were having joint meetings. Staff of yet another board held widely divergent views which rendered teamwork impossible. Different interpretations of the problems and plans of local boards were advanced to the community, thus adding to the confusion. Ongoing discussion in the 5 areas did not result in appropriate action. Decentralization existed to the point where area directors neither met as a group, nor were they responsible to a single supervisor. Uneven staffing, coupled with relatively autonomous functioning, inevitably led to disparate results.

Matters were further complicated by unfavorable publicity spotlighting charges of fiscal mismanagement. Allocation of additional funds was temporarily suspended by Federal and city authorities. Residents questioned neighborhood workers about what was going on.

A shift in organizational plans was made by the administration. Elected neighborhood organizing committees were now envisioned as temporary bodies which would elect the permanent boards. It was decided to stagger elections in the five areas and direct whatever resources were available into one at a time. In December a big drive involving many youth and Cadets was launched in one area. The results, however, were less than satisfactory. The previously cited weaknesses were compounded by the concentration of staff in a single area.

At this point, the Executive Director, considering the formation of neighborhood boards as high priority, by-passed organizational channels and appointed a special assistant to take charge. This new administrator was action-oriented, and was able to operate without going through existing channels. A person with a political background, he used political techniques to carry out his duties. Lines of authority were established, staff was centralized (workers were sent back to work in their own areas), and a number of personnel changes were made. Emphasis was on "speeding up" the election process.

At this writing, neighborhood elections in the first area have just been held. A brief description of what transpired follows, because it is typical of plans being made for the other areas.

Canvassing was conducted on a block by block, house by house basis. A Household Registry Form requested information regarding head of household, list of persons over 14, family income, length of residence, grievances, and membership in any organization functioning in Central Harlem. Nominees for block representation (one adult and one youth) were solicited at the same time. A booklet with the qualifications of each block's candidates was distributed, along with pictures and profiles. According to the director of area one, middle class people were not nominated. The nominees were characterized as "poor but active," ranging from the sparsely employed to unemployed. They tended to be the informal leaders, those who might be active in registering a protest concerning painting, garbage collection, etc.

An intensive campaign was conducted by a staff of 43 (including 8 professionals) plus youth, Cadets, and volunteers. Neighborhood workers included factory workers and domestics and people who had never been employed. There were voting booths in the streets, sound trucks, and house visits.

While the registration and voting process were taking place, action on specific issues began to be taken. For example, housing complaints were acted on. A meeting demanding better transportation drew more than 200 people. Some concessions were obtained from the city. Issues such as establishing a community center also attracted a sizable crowd.

Canvassers reported that individual respondents were generally skeptical; they had been sought out many times in the past by agencies and universities for informational purposes and had had enough. Many tended to swing to a firm position for or against the whole project.

Other observers reported that some of the strongest opposition from organized groups to the organizing effort came from church groups. But there was no evidence of any organized opposition bloc. The smaller church groups wanted to be represented on the neighborhood boards. Civil rights groups were asked to send observers but not delegates.

Over 200 temporary committee members were elected: one youth and one adult from each of 87 blocks; plus 28 representatives from the four housing projects in the area. 68 additional members are to be chosen by 42 community organizations. This temporary committee has the responsibility of electing a permanent neighborhood board.

Figures released indicate that out of an estimated 28,000 eligible voters, 13,000 registered, and between 10 and 11 thousand voted, an extremely high percentage when compared with other such elections. Estimates of the attendance at the official inauguration ceremony held on May 31, 1966 varied from 1200 to 2000.

Essentially the same procedure is being followed in the other 4 areas. Two are in the process of registration and 2 are striving to "get out the vote." Summer of 1966 is the target date for completion of the election of the temporary organizing committees.

Sufficient data to evaluate the significance of electing these temporary organizing committees is not yet available. However, on this subject the HARYOU-ACT Executive Director is quoted as follows in the June 14 edition of the Amsterdam News: "We claim success not only in the most difficult battle but the most vital battle in the war against poverty: namely the unification of the victims."

Casting a vote for a neighbor under the pressure of an aggressive campaign that carries the ballot to one's doorstep does not necessarily constitute unification, especially when no definable issue or program is at stake. It is also unclear to what extent the poor will be represented or have influence, since the permanent board has yet to be selected. Indirect elections may complicate the situation further by favoring the more articulate and established elements in the community. In addition, the relationship with the HARYOU-ACT Board of Trustees, the funding source that will exercise quality control, has yet to be worked out.

An analysis of the election process indicates that it had to be conducted along the lines of a commercial sales campaign introducing a new product. To cultivate acceptance, repetition and interpretation had to be carried on over a long period of time. Explanations of what a neighborhood board is, how the elections work, who can be a nominee, etc., were made repeatedly.

When the concept of a neighborhood board is more closely related to helpful services and relevant action on meaningful issues, interpreting it will be more easily realized. As it was, services and action that developed were by-products of a more general campaign.

In the absence of specifics, staff has tended to exaggerate and oversimplify what can be expected from the boards, which in the long run may prove dysfunctional. Consider, for example, a question-and-answer brochure published by HARYOU-ACT which refers to the boards as the "final hope in eliminating the pathologies" of illiteracy, unemployment, inadequate housing, narcotics addiction, broken homes, juvenile delinquency, poor educational facilities, and a "dependency on governmental assistance." It also states that a neighborhood board "properly established, and properly executing its power will eliminate the hypocrites, so-called leaders, the exploitation of the poor, and the notion that the poor don't count."

It remains to be seen what meaning general and organizational appeal has to the low income person, usually more interested in the specific and concrete in the first place.

The consequences and importance of reaching out to the unaffiliated, demonstrating an interest and concern in people who have never been consulted or involved, cannot begin to be estimated. One of the most favorable indications thus far has been the willingness of those canvassed to give information for the Household Registry Form. This receptiveness suggests that given the right circumstances, involvement and participation are preferred to isolation and apathy, thus demonstrating the potential viability of the grass-roots self help organization.

The Project and the Community

For purposes of this review, we have singled out the community organization aspects of the HARYOU-ACT program. What actually happens, however, is that one part of the program has an impact on the others. When youth sense disorganization and feel they are wasting time, they begin to drift away, and the community organization aspects of the program suffer. If the Cadet Corps sponsors an enjoyable parade, the reverse occurs.

On a broader, more public level, criticism in the press affects the image of the agency and the response of segments of the community to its program. Staff reported growing skepticism and resistance among the people following charges of fiscal mismanagement.

Charges of disorganization, mismanagement of funds, and factionalism have been promulgated both within and without the organization. Such attacks aggravated the agency's program problems. Resources, program priorities, and strategies became predicated on defense. The community organization program was more than ever an instrument of organizational defense. For example, although the question of HYU's firm ties to HARYOU-ACT had already been resolved, HYU now became an organizational liability. Pressured to deliver what it had promised, the administration found activation of neighborhood boards a matter of urgency. In the face of proliferating attack, honest differences on program issues were increasingly interpreted as hostile acts or lack of confidence.

Apart from the substantive issues which underlie the attempt to take control of HARYOU-ACT or the merits of the charges, the agency was put in a position where its very existence was a day-to-day matter. At virtually the same time, its funds were withheld, its director was suspended, and its bonding withdrawn. Operating under great difficulties at best, program was brought to a virtual standstill during this period.

HARYOU-ACT must reflect the community from which it emerged: the variety of tugs, and factional conflicts, the perplexing nature of the problems, the lack of experience of workers who have never had previous opportunities. Impossible demands were placed on the agency. Few guidelines or precedents were available for the complex administrative tasks to be dealt with in a relatively brief period of time. This did not allow for systematic growth.

The nature of the commitment of HARYOU-ACT leadership is unclear. Evidence suggests that partisan political motivation is intense. The agency's potential as a political base was always apparent.

Political motivations and objectives tended to intrude on social welfare decisions. Unable to move quickly to overcome weaknesses or deficiencies in the program, the agency Administrator launched a type of attack, which fostered community disorganization, including risking a type of self-fulfilling prophecy in regard to riots and bloodshed. In the Spring, city and Federal authorities "beat a path" to central Harlem in a series of attempts to persuade HARYOU-ACT to fill 5000 summer Youth Corps openings. Issues of timing, scarcity of staff, and fiscal confusion on the part of all funding sources made this request a difficult one. City and Federal politicians and antipoverty administrators feared the ghetto would again ignite. They pushed HARYOU-ACT to the point where it could not refuse to undertake an impossible task under the worst of conditions. When attack on the agency and its administration came, based in part on the consequences of this crash Youth Corps program, those who had forced the program through HARYOU-ACT's inadequate administrative apparatus were silent. An embittered, embarrassed, angry HARYOU-ACT administration saw no support other than the latent violence of the ghetto. Thus circumstances forced this reasoning on them as an organizational defense, instead of other possible strategies.

Deepening the cleavage between Negroes and whites by exploiting nationalist feelings may temporarily rally the minority group behind certain leaders and thereby sustain the organization through crises. It will also inevitably blur differences that exist within the group as well as separate it from its natural allies. The leaders then become the negotiators with the outside world and the sole channel through which moneys are funneled.

Such strategies perpetuate the isolation of the ghetto and make the executors its gatekeepers.

HARYOU-ACT contacted the various agencies in Harlem and negotiated agreements that these agencies would recognize HARYOU-ACT as the sole recipient of grants and dispenser of funds for the antipoverty projects for the Summer of 1966. (In view of HARYOU-ACT's problems at this time, seeking greater fiscal responsibility could only add greater stress.) Meanwhile, New York City's antipoverty commission requested that the Federal government fund the projects separately.

HARYOU-ACT's answer was to identify the enemy for the people of Harlem as: 1) "the politician . . . who attempts to finance directly groups or agencies independently and thereby purchase their allegiance to interests alien to the Central Harlem Community; 2) the community resident who solicits the funding authority and thereby the fragmentation and duplication of services, a process [which] has long victimized the residents of Harlem."[24]

Aside from any issue of competency, the relationships that would have developed if HARYOU-ACT had administered the smaller agencies' grants would have strengthened the project's position as the sole spokesman for Harlem. A case could be made that leaders who reach for monopolistic control of funds are trying to stifle independent agencies and organizations, and community initiative.

It is notable that the entire HARYOU-ACT project (rather than just its community organization program) has been embroiled in the community planning issues of Central Harlem, a target community which virtually *defies* solution of its problems. HARYOU-ACT's potential for dealing effectively with these problems has thus far been hampered by local and national issues which have been enacted in its bailiwick. Until the power forces, both local and national, desist from their efforts to use HARYOU-ACT for their own purposes, positive movement of the agency as a whole will be uncertain and its potential unrealized.

CHAPTER VIII:
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION ISSUES

The community organization experience of the Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Development (OJD) projects is a rich source of new practice knowledge. Its sweep in many ways reflects the metamorphosis which community organization is currently undergoing. It has produced a variety of case records which pose numerous issues. This chapter will draw on the composite experience of the projects to cite examples, and offer suggestions, which will be useful to community organizers and social planners.

Reaching the Target Population

Moved by their commitment to serve the poor, OJD projects sought to involve new populations in community self-help efforts. The heretofore unaffiliated low income person was solicited to participate in:

> "a process of social action in which the people of the community organize themselves for planning and action; define their common and individual needs and problems; make group and individual plans to meet their needs and solve their problems; execute these plans with a maximum reliance upon community resources; and supplement these resources when necessary with services and materials from governmental and nongovernmental agencies outside the community." [25]

The demanding nature of this process is made clear by this accurate definition. Participation requires a high degree of social, organizational, political, and interpersonal skills. Community organization activity demands of its participants the very qualities which have been systematically corroded by generations of poverty and discrimination. It was to restore these qualities in delinquent youngsters that the OJD projects created community organization programs.

The anomaly faced by the community organizer working with the grass roots is that the target community has relinquished various resources required for successful organization. In its efforts to insulate itself from continuous disappointment and defeat, the target population has dismissed the efficacy of the community organization self-help approach. In a study conducted by the Mobilization for Youth (MFY) research division, it was found that the residents of the Lower East Side were consistently pessimistic about the outcome of a group of local people getting together to affect such problems as reducing graft, controlling juvenile delinquency, and improving schools. MFY staff, on the other hand, viewed the results of such group activity more optimistically. Lack of resource for successful engagement in community organization activity, and lack of conviction as to its viability, appear to increase as socio-economic status decreases. To facilitate the goals of controlling and preventing delinquency, the project community workers engaged that segment of the population among whom chances for organizational success are scarcest, and chances for organizational failure greatest.

Social workers, educators, and other service practitioners consider it a maxim of successful client involvement that the services proffered be offered at a level "where the people are." This concept calls upon the worker to make an appraisal of the potential recipient's readiness for service. If the recipient is not yet ready, it is presumed that the service will not be accepted or if accepted, improperly used. Trained as they are to perform within fairly rigid parameters, service professionals are often unable to recognize that programs may need to be revised to meet the characteristics of a new client group.

Instead, recipients are sought who fit the requirements of programs. Despite specific intent to do otherwise, this was the dynamic by which some OJD project community organization programs became involved with the upwardly mobile, stable working class poor rather than with those in the lowest socio-economic group. The neighborhood organizer found the Federal civil servant, the church activist, and the political aspirant first to respond. In some projects, it was recognized that successful community organization required parallel organization efforts directed toward welfare clients, unemployed, tenement and rooming-house dwellers, and families with a female head. In other instances, the project program replicated previous community organization efforts and did little to demonstrate to lower class youth that they could anticipate, as adults, a productive and directive role in their community.

The OJD projects which successfully organized the unaffiliated residents started somewhere ahead of where "the group was" and encouraged them to participate in community organization programs for which they were not yet "ready"; and simultaneously, they altered those programs to better suit their constituents.

Service vs. Social Action

Shall community organization concern itself exclusively with changing social institutions so that ultimately large groups of recipients of service will be benefitted, or shall it attempt to redress the pressing problems of its group members? Is it necessary for community organization programs to include a service component so that needs may be met at the same time that institutions are changed? Are service and change mutually exclusive? Do organizations which attempt both accomplish neither?

Questions such as these are raised by the experience of the OJD projects. Since the professional and general communities persist in debating the priorities between preventing pathology and curing its victims, it is necessary to point out that this dichotomy is a false one. Neither function can be undertaken alone. Social circumstances must unquestionably be changed so that people are not victimized. At the same time, those victimized by social disorder must be treated.

The comprehensive approach of OJD projects precludes the assumption that problems of social dislocation in general, and juvenile delinquency in particular, may be resolved by single systems of program. As has been seen, although there are obvious areas of overlap, the social action function is the province of community organization. The service function—be it rehabilitative, therapeutic, educational, or assuring welfare benefits—is the province of the appropriate service discipline (vocational, education, case work, law, social investigation, housing administration).

Social action and service components may exist either as part of a comprehensive project, or, more desirably, as separate cooperative entities. The separation of the action and service functions into discreet organizations is suggested here because the two functions are frequently in disharmony. For example, it is not easy to negotiate with an agency for a client on a *quid pro quo* basis and at the same time attempt to change its policies or personnel.

The experience of the projects illustrates that dispensers of public agency services are congenitally and organizationally unable to distinguish between the protest and service function when practiced by the same organization. Thus the public agency sees social action against itself as a breach of faith, as a disloyal act violating arrangements between the staffs. This estrangement is furthered when the public agency worker contacts the project which has undertaken both service and action functions, and requests that social action cease. Such requests for individual cooperation are made and granted routinely in the pursuit of service goals. But when the request is for withdrawal of an independent social action, it is refused because community organizers do not control the actions of their constituents. This explanation, however, is often not believed or understood by the public agency, and the service function may be seriously, if not irreparably, disrupted. On the other hand, if the project agrees to withdraw its social action on the basis of the target institution's request, it jeopardizes its potential for organizing in good faith.

Experience also illustrates that the service needs of the poor are so varied and proliferating that they will consume all the resources of the community organization group. To disregard the immediate problems of the evictee on the sidewalk while dealing with the total tenement housing problem is unthinkable; yet the service problems of a single large family on the street may take weeks of work by several workers, may, in fact, absorb more organizational resource than is entailed in mobilizing the entire neighborhood to social action. As evidenced in the projects reviewed here, wherever the service and action aspects of program are present in the same organization, compassion for individuals in distress is usually sufficient unto itself to set aside the action part. Project experience indicates that dual programs either converted to service alone (while continuing to utilize social action metaphors) or separated the functions.

Community Organizations of Youth

Despite the fact that the majority of community organization activities engaged adult participants, several of the projects developed programs in which the participants were neighborhood youth. The youth appeared to be fairly sharply divided between upwardly mobile, success-oriented youngsters and unemployed, failure-oriented dropouts who were subject to frequent contact with law enforcement agencies.

Organizing youth primarily or exclusively on the basis of social action attracts the upwardly mobile youngster. His commitment is great and he tends to feel that success can be obtained through established militant methods of redress (picketing, demonstrations, petitions, sit-ins). This group is fairly sophisticated politically and has successfully participated in programs of a high degree of organizational complexity.

Out-of-school, out-of-work youngsters have no faith in the methods of the civil rights movement. This group cannot be brought together to engage exclusively in collective social action. Where groups consisting of both types of youngsters existed, continuous struggle between the two tended to bring activity to a standstill. When out-of-school, out-of-work youngsters were part of the education and employment programs of the projects, they seemed able to participate effectively at the same time in collective self-help programs. Experience with the youth was identical to the adults in that meeting service needs first was requisite to social action program participation. Also, as with the adults, the service function needs to be separate from the action function.

The issue of nationalism was evident among minority group youth. In widely disparate cities, the young people debate and argue the question of black power. Hostility toward the white community is overtly expressed. While community organization youth groups have been arenas where debate has taken place, they obviously could not resolve the problems under debate. For the projects in the Negro ghettos, the issue of nationalism presents a major problem that community organizers must contend with now and in the future.

The Independence of Constituent Community Organization Groups

It is argued that social change, particularly militant demonstrations and public redress of grievances, is outside the purview of community organization program in a government-sponsored comprehensive project. It is suggested that it is necessary to find independent, nonpublic support for such community organization efforts.

Private foundations, The Citizens Crusade Against Poverty, and other entities have been noted as sources of support. However, there is *no* evidence in the experience of the multifunded comprehensive OJD projects that private funding sources operated with any greater flexibility than public ones. It may be that the source of support for independent community action groups should remain in public funding. Some projects have prohibited, explicitly or implicitly, their community organization groups from undertaking any direct action or controversial activities. Others have taken the position that their groups are independent of the sponsoring project which, therefore, has no means of controlling activities. Although the range of experience between these extremes is broad, the majority of the community organization programs seemed to fall near the noncontroversial. However, the range would seem to indicate that a great many more opportunities for independent community organization activity existed than were utilized.

It may be that the range of project experience peaked in this way as a result of caution engendered by the MFY crisis. It may also be that if projects begin to exercise options for independent community organization work, new restrictions might be brought to bear. It is not the role of the demonstration project to insure that this will not happen. Quite the contrary, in continuation of the work it began, the OJD project should be testing the roles of government in support of self-help strategies to alter environments. It may well be that community organization under government sponsorship cannot provide the degree of independence needed to permit groups to engage in controversial activities. On the other hand, the guiding policy on the subject of community organization may be the statement by the Demonstration Review Panel of OJD quoted in Chapter I.

Speculation will be replaced with knowledge when the alternatives have been fairly tested. This testing of alternatives is taking place infrequently today in contrast to the early years of the OJD projects. What is more, the failure to test is sometimes accompanied by statements prejudging the outcome; i.e., independent community organization activity is not viable.

Often a project's institutional alliances in the community determine its stance with regard to the independence of its community organization groups. The experimental and demonstration form of the OJD projects in the early years was highly congenial to constituent independence. The permanent service form which most projects have since assumed tends to ally the project with the existing welfare system. The risks to that system which genuine independence entails are therefore eschewed.

The weight of the experience of the projects indicates that once community organization programs promise or deliver independence to constituent groups, it is virtually impossible to withdraw it. Constituent groups have acted on behalf of members against sponsoring projects or local institutions in a number of instances. They have also opposed project boards and staffs on internal administrative and policy issues. In too many instances, such partisanship has been viewed by project staff and board with trepidation, rather than seen as successful community organization in the neighborhood.

Choosing Community Organization Program Strategies

The experience of the OJD projects provides a source for systematic and deliberate program decisions for community organization groups. Such decisions may be developed from the specific analysis of program types, inventorying their strengths and weaknesses in new situations. Decisions may then be based on the extent to which the advantages of a given program plan match the community, target, client, and participants.

The following analysis of a strategy employed in several projects to correct housing problems is a case in point. "Rent strike" was a term coined to identify legally sanctioned methods of bringing slum landlords into code compliance. In brief, tenants petitioned the courts for permission to withhold rents, which were then deposited in escrow pending the correction of existing code violations by the landlord. The rent strike became a community organization strategy in several of the project programs. It was seen as a viable method of self help around which lower class slum residents could be introduced to continuing community organization activity. Examined in the light of actual experience, this judgment was in error. The rent strike technique actually had a negative influence on recruiting new people into community organization activity because of the difficulty of follow through by volunteers. In the first place, the rent strike called for organization of the participants on a building-by-building basis; it required that virtually all the tenants in the building be included. It necessitated engaging an attorney and arranging for him and the organized tenants to appear before a judge. At the hearing, permission to withhold rent was given only after the building was proved to be in violation. The one basis upon which violations could be proved was a written and filed report of a building or health department inspector. When tenants attempted to get inspections made prior to court appearance, they were usually unable to do so. Where an inspection was made, reports were often not filed or unavailable. The inadequate public system of code enforcement which forced the tenants to seek relief through rent withholding became the only basis on which they could legally establish a building to be in violation.

Proceedings before the judge were subject to frequent postponement and delay at the instigation of the landlord's attorney. For each postponed hearing, it was necessary for the community organizer to mobilize the petitioning tenants to appear. This entailed baby-sitting arrangements, transportation, feeding youngsters and parents who often spent the better part of the day in court. For the employed petitioner, it meant risking a day's absence from the job. If, after much delay, the petitioners succeeded in obtaining the court's permission to deposit the rent in escrow, there was still no guarantee that the landlord would make the necessary repairs and remove the violations on the building. The repairs not made, tenants were required to continue to deposit their rent with the court on pain of eviction. Satisfaction was often limited to the knowledge that the landlord was being deprived of his income. However, tenants were more seriously inconvenienced by the whole process than the landlord.

Experience with rent strike makes it clear that it was ineffective as a program strategy to induce community organization activity. The effect of rent strikes on participants was the opposite of what had been intended. It discouraged participation and confirmed the fatalism of the residents. The projects soon abandoned this strategy.

Another strategy utilized as a basis of organization by various projects was demonstrations. The experience of the OJD projects (and more broadly the civil rights movement) has indicated that such techniques are highly effective as a means of mustering support, particularly broad national support, around such issues as desegregating public accommodations. They can effectively bring pressure to bear on the local social system from a broader, more liberal community. Demonstrations have been notably less successful in cases where the grievances impinge on values and interests which the majority community considers sacrosant, e.g., welfare, housing, segregated schools.

The use of temporary and permanent forms of organization as project strategy has demonstrated that this, too, is a matter of assessing community characteristics and matching them to organizational structure. The pressures of day-to-day life in the slum preclude the kind of voluntary activity that proliferates in the middle class community. In attempts to involve residents whose time is severely limited, temporary activity within a permanent organization has been utilized as well as both ad hoc and permanent groups.

Ad hoc organizational methods lend themselves to social protest activities and seasonal activities, such as voter registration campaigns. Permanent organizations are preferable when the community organization effort requires continuous or frequent interaction with a large formal organization. Continuing organizations also provide stability in areas where there is a high degree of residential mobility.

There has been some indication in preceding chapters that the structure of a particular organization may be subservient to program substance in determining the efficacy of community organization effort. Success can be noted in programs organized along many different structures so that specific conclusions cannot be made as to which structures are most effective. What can be recommended is that community organizers make conscious selection of alternate organizational strategies.

The experience of the community organization programs demonstrates an apparent contradiction along at least one structural variable. Experience organizing at the grass roots indicates that *decentralized* groups are the most effective basis for bringing people together. Unaffiliated people can successfully relate to the congenial, small, neighborhood-based group. They would be alienated by a large formal organization governed by rules of order and written by-laws. On the other hand, attempts to bring about social change and to engage community organizations in dialogue or controversy, necessitate action by large city-wide agencies.

To increase their effectiveness, it has often been necessary to parlay the activities of small groups into such structures as councils, conferences, and associations. Perhaps the most controversial of the community organization representative structures is the community board, established to act as the disbursement unit of local antipoverty programs. None of the projects has demonstrated really effective methods for establishing such groups. A major shortcoming was the concentration on the methods of selecting the local antipoverty groups to be included in the community board without making an attempt to insure that the resulting elected body would be truly representative of the target neighborhood. As a result, the elderly, welfare recipients, the physically handicapped, trade union members, and the youth in the target neighborhood tended to be underrepresented, if represented at all.

An accurate cross section of a neighborhood might have been obtained through a system of proportional representation. By such a device, the major sub-groups in the neighborhood could be assigned a proportionate number of board seats. While this introduces an element of arbitrariness, it presents a practical way of achieving a desirable end. This idea is not new to the political scene.

The projects' ability to innovate in this area may have been limited by the complex political problems which accompanied the organizational ones attending local board formation. It may also be that some projects saw the constituents' ability to serve as neighborhood board members in terms of the previously mentioned concept of readiness. They may not have wished to structure participation so that those not yet ready would be automatically included. The possibility should be noted that projects may limit board participation to their own constituents.

Generally speaking, the extent of community participation in these board elections has been disappointing. The elected boards have been criticized as nonrepresentative, and despite the good offices of the American Arbitration Association, injunctions, as well as less formal statements, have charged the sponsors with having improperly conducted the elections.

The emphasis of the projects on environmental, rather than clinical strategies points to the need for new practice in areas such as recording, the role of the worker, and supervision. Much community organization practice in these areas has heretofore been taken directly from the clinical methods. For example, process recording is of limited utility to the practice pioneered by OJD projects because it fails to provide adequate information regarding the functioning of an organization. Projects have experimented with tape recording and minutes as means of community organization accounting. The role of the worker, formerly seen largely as that of enabler, has been broadened to include broker, advocate, and activist. The supervisory process in the new community organization is no longer limited to the formal conference, since methods such as observation and demonstration by the supervisor have been introduced.

In addition to expanding the role alternatives available to the professional worker, the community organization programs sponsored by the projects under review have employed untrained local residents as organizers. Nonprofessionals have been recruited to enable the projects to bridge the gap which exists between the community and the helping agency. Nonprofessionals bring dual loyalty to the project and the neighborhood. Their actions, based on these ties, are often different from those of professionals.

The projects' experience in working with the powerless, rather than the elite, has pointed up the need to develop strategies of utilizing powerlessness, rather than influence, to effect planning decisions on behalf of these constituents. Community organization practice must seek allies among the civil rights, student, and trade union movements, as well as from the business and the professional communities.

Representation

In addition to issues of methodology involved in organizing the poor into delegate bodies, community organizers need to address themselves to the consequences of separate representative structures, for these separatist strategies may be the antithesis of the primary goals in community organization.

The community as a whole is involved in determining the nature and scope of poverty programs through its activities in politics, on local health and welfare councils, on boards and advisory committees of public and voluntary agencies, as contributors and advisors to educational, research, business, and welfare institutions. It is within these policy making bodies that participation has meaning. But councils whose participants are made up of the poor alone are structures separate from those utilized by the total community. This participation may in actuality preclude or inordinately delay the engagement of the poor in the conventional community decision making processes. To fulfill its dual mandates of social change and self help, community organization effort must endeavor to place the poor in direct contact with other segments of the community in regularly constituted formal and informal policy making groups.

A somewhat different issue of representation is the extent to which the community acknowledges that a grass roots organization speaks for its constituency. Many projects found that grass roots organizations were dismissed as irrelevant or nonrepresentative because they spoke for a minority of their constituent population.

This charge is somewhat ironic in the light of the patterns of participation of many middle class community groups. The grass roots community organization programs reviewed consistently showed a greater degree of membership involvement and a higher percentage of population participation than is found in such voluntary associations as unions, PTAs, and political clubs. This rejection of the grass roots suggests a different standard from that commonly exercised in the community, where PTAs, although comprising less than 5 percent of a school's parent body, may speak unchallenged, where candidates of a political party are often chosen in primaries in which a fraction of registered voters participate. Such practices are characteristic of participation in contemporary urban, industrial, democratic societies. Among the factors often cited to explain this apathy are: oligarchy; an organization's domination by full-time employed and elected officials; and, the multiplicity of organizations that individuals participate in. Full-fledged participation in the decision making processes must provide the poor the same latitude for organizational inadequacies as is permitted the rest of the community.

In grass roots organization the conditions of affiliation are often unconventional. As indicated, participation may consist of repeated activity in discreet ad hoc programs interspersed with periods of inactivity. Membership is frequently not formalized by the payment of dues or the issuance of a membership card. Although membership criteria are unspecified, both the organization and the participant clearly recognize a relationship.

The general community, however, or the target organization, will frequently exploit these differences between grass roots and more formal community groups by refusing to acknowledge the relationship. In organizations of clients and others dependent on the public generosity, prudence is necessary with regard to making the identity of the membership public.

Community Conflict

With the entry of the OJD projects into the political, financial, and governmental channels of community life, conflict was inevitable as a mechanism in community organization.

In one city, the OJD program existed concurrently with another comprehensive community organization-oriented project located in the local university. As both programs developed, it became clear that the university-based project was predicating its community organization program on an aggressive, social action based program of building power in the target slum community. The OJD community organization program's interest in creating local self-help entities was projected in more temperate terms.

The social welfare and political communities, in general, and the city administration in particular, greeted the university-based program with ill-concealed hostility. The demands put forth by the groups organized under the aegis of this project were ignored or rejected. The issues which arose over housing and welfare community organization efforts were so sharply drawn as to be reported nationally. While furious controversy raged between the university project and the city, the OJD project found it could get from the city the concessions being vociferously denied the university group. The role of the militant university project appears to have been to engage the city in public controversy over demands beyond what the city was willing to meet. In the ensuing process, the city was forced to resolve the issue by concession. The concession was granted to the OJD group, while the very existence of the other group which had articulated the demands was questioned. In addition to producing results, the OJD group was permitted much additional latitude for action. When the university project was eliminated, not only did concessions to the OJD group cease, but the city and the social welfare establishment then attempted to moderate its approach.

In some cities, the fact that projects were, or appeared to be, favored by the local political and welfare administration had a variety of consequences. Their ability to innovate or take risks was virtually eliminated. The target populations viewed them with suspicion and they became subject to pressure for pragmatic hard-headedness. Often, as the projects strove to resist such pressures, they were subject to criticism as being too radical and against the "established agency." While they were being criticized from the right for intemperance and rabble rousing, activist groups accused them of being overcautious and conservative. Civil rights groups, and others, sometimes found projects unwilling to engage in run-of-the-mill social action programs.

In their attempt to avoid conflict with the broader community, some projects failed to handle satisfactorily the issue of the independence of local community organization groups. Projects which attempted to control and limit local groups found themselves alienated from their constituents. Citing unclaimed options is not a substitute for independent action; it is the opposite, for independence is meaningful only when it is exercised.

To pursue community organization programs successfully, conflict was virtually inevitable since the *sine qua non* of community organization is the independence of the group being organized. Knowing that such an absolute rarely exists should not dissuade project planners from insisting on this option, even at the risk of being accused of political naiveté. Despite the knowledge that no one will believe you, the projects must champion the irrevocable nature of local community organization self-determined activities. Projects which took such a position were subsequently attacked, which was to be expected. They were, however, among the most successful in organizing at the grass roots, providing real role models for local youth, and engaging in social change.

In the early years of their experience, some administrators of OJD projects were criticized because they permitted the projects to become involved in conflict situations. More worldly pilots, it was argued, would have avoided differences with funding sources or with powerful political, economic, and welfare interests. Such judgments were based on a view of social welfare institutions as exclusively enablers and consensus seekers.

Such a view is not viable today in America. Such judgments place the responsibility for becoming embroiled in crises on the youth project or its community organization programs. This view assumes that the welfare institution should keep the peace at all costs.

Lack of controversy existed when projects have been induced to abandon the experimentation of social science and the dedication of social welfare. Instead many have chosen expediency.

The various crises that occurred in the projects took place for a number of reasons. At least one was a result of a willingness to experiment, innovate, and take risks in *fulfilling* the mandate of its original proposal.

The *best* indicator of project innovative action is the strain it inevitably produces. Project reports and proposals are unreliable indicators of innovation because their language abounds in expressions of militance and protest even when it describes programs rooted in direct service, such as early childhood education.

Projects which have undergone and survived crisis on the basis of their community organization program appear to have found a source of support in the independence of the neighborhood groups which provoked the crisis initially. Such groups rallied to the support of the project, demonstrating their mastery of the techniques of self expression. Coming to the aid of the funding source, assuming the helper role in behalf of their sponsors, furthered their independence and enhanced their conception of their own abilities. The participation of the community organization groups in the crisis became, in such instances, a significant maturing process.

Conflict and crisis in themselves are neither to be admired or abhorred. They are journeymen instruments of political and economic interaction as any elected official, labor leader, or statesman will testify. To expect that efforts at community self help would be without conflict and crisis is to *mock* the objectives of community organization program.

The Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Development as a Community Organization Entity

In all walks of life, it is a well known fact that program patterns follow funding patterns in faithful obeisance to the adage, "He who pays the piper calls the tune." This is acknowledged shamefacedly in those instances where it is not totally denied. All too frequently dispensers of public and voluntary funds seek programs which appear to be innovative, but which in fact run no risks and threaten no section of the community. Proposals are written which publicly declare intentions to alter the status quo, while assuring the influentials who read between the lines that they have nothing to fear.

For a variety of reasons, the OJD projects were able to set and maintain standards of integrity and independence. The efficacy of the OJD as a community organization instrument was facilitated by its time limited nature. Since it was not conceived as a permanent entity, it was spared many of the pitfalls of organizational self interest. The issue of its own survival was moot because the termination of the agency at the expiration of the enabling legislation was a matter of public record. Much of this protective mantle of a finite life was passed on to the various projects. From the inception of program, project staff members articulated their task in terms of three to five years. Much attention was paid to the issue of continuity, to the ways in which programs developed under the grants could be replicated by other agencies and made a permanent part of the welfare scene.

The issue of whether OJD funds should go to existing community institutions or to the creation of new institutions was hotly contested in most project cities. Because it was nonlocal, financially independent, and free of entangling professional and associational alliances, OJD was able to break away from the existing patterns of welfare service. It took the position that need for innovation grew out of the *failures of the existing agencies* and that it would *not* replicate failure by supporting or expanding existing programs.

The OJD programs were created as research and demonstration projects to develop innovative projects. This orientation helped free the projects from fear of failure, and the projects could legitimately consider so called failures as successful achievements. New knowledge could be gained by learning that certain programs were worthless, and this information could be put to good use by ongoing programs as they appraised new strategies and techniques. The research and demonstration nature of the projects also provided the project staff, particularly research and program planners, with an excellent stance with which to face community criticism.

By stipulating the kind of innovative program required and the population from which the clients were to be drawn, OJD projects hoped to alter agency services and expand their populations.[26] This strategy was effectively administered by OJD with regard to newly created projects. However, this strategy in the hands of the projects, directed toward local agencies, was virtually useless. Contract compliance was pro forma. Enforcing it was impossible. Once contract funds were withdrawn, the program was discontinued and the agency which had received the contract was unchanged. This experience did not apply in the case of several local agencies where change took place as a result of internal agency and other factors. Several projects inappropriately attributed real change to their own contract program.

The role of the OJD has been changing since its inception in Sept. 1961. Its projects now see themselves as permanent social institutions. The influence of the OJD has declined as other funding sources have taken on a greater share of the support. Public battles over the political and administrative propriety of several of the projects have cautioned and chastened all. In addition, changes in government administration and legislation on local, state, and Federal levels have moved the OJD projects from the forefront to the mainstream of social welfare development.

One or two of the projects appear to be maintaining the experimental tradition of their early years. These agencies embrace, rather than eschew, newly arising controversial issues. In areas such as social protest, legal services, and organizing public agency clients, these projects continue to act as gadflys to the social welfare establishment (which in some cities includes antipoverty and former OJD projects).

This report cannot identify those factors which determined why some projects were able to maintain their experimental tradition and others could not. Unfortunately, there are very few criteria which can be cited as influencing in one direction or another. It is generally presumed that the innovative function of all institutions is time limited, and that all inevitably move to fairly conventional conforming organizational patterns. Another possible factor is that many experimental entities in the social welfare field are forced to concede much to receive the material support necessary to bring them to life. Too little is left for the subsequent life of the project.

By a peculiar accident of history, the OJD was a time limited venture and therefore free of the constraints which usually influence the policies of public and voluntary funding sources. It is a fine example of deliberate, creative use of the power that inheres to a granting agency.[27]

The idea that the community and its institutions, rather than the juvenile offender, should be the target for change and rehabilitation had nowhere been tested in the social welfare community. The Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Development pioneered in this area when it formulated a series of demonstration projects based on the approach of altering the environment which produces the delinquent (and other) pathologies. In contrast to other funding sources, which tended to support continuing welfare programs, OJD used its influence to encourage experimentation and new programs. Risks were not abhorred as a matter of course, and the agency was willing to stand by a project in the face of conflict with existing social welfare institutions. In effect, the Federal agency itself was engaged in community organization work on a national social planning level.

The activity of the agency has, above all, demonstrated that it is possible to base a community organization program on the assumption that major involvement on the part of community residents to improve their own social situation is the requisite for a successful comprehensive program to combat delinquency in disadvantaged and demoralized communities.

FOOTNOTES

1. Zorbaugh, H. *The Gold Coast and the Slum,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929, p. 128.
2. Clark, Kenneth. *The Dark Ghetto,* New York: Harper & Row, 1965, p. 12. Kenneth Clark writes in 1965: "The pathologies of the ghetto community perpetuate themselves through cumulative ugliness, deterioration and isolation. . . ."
3. The experience of New York City in eliminating juvenile violence is a striking example of unanticipated consequences incurred by unilaterally disrupting patterns of deviant juvenile adjustment. By the early sixties, the combined efforts of the New York City Youth Board and Police Department succeeded in eliminating the fighting street gang. The conditions which produced the deviance remained untouched: the youth were involved at best (and rarely) as clients, and at worst (and frequently) as criminals; the neighborhood community, not at all. As a result, new, but less visible forms of deviance developed largely around the use of narcotics, (i.e., Ohlin and Cloward's retreatist model). This new deviance, by any measure, has proven infinitely more costly than the old. It was to avoid pitfalls such as these that innovative comprehensive programs with strong community bases were evolved.
4. These are represented by the "War on Poverty" and other programs of the Great Society, such as Medicare, the Federal Education Act, and civil rights bills.
5. Concerning the exercise of such power, it is interesting to note the *New York Times* editorial on November 11, 1964 regarding social protest under the aegis of publicly funded agencies. It stated:
   ". . . . Any form of social protest is bound to generate controversy, and some forms clearly raise serious questions of propriety for an agency that draws . . . much of its support from government funds . . . But the poor must be encouraged to believe that there are ways to express their views on the need for social betterment . . . The right to fight City Hall is as much the prerogative of the poor as of any other group of citizens; it is only when those who dwell in the slums and have too little to keep themselves and their families in dignity surrender to a supine sense of total futility and helplessness that the community has real cause to worry."
6. Smith, Delefield. *The Right to Life,* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955; Keith-Lucas, Allen. *Decisions About People in Need,* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957.
7. Ignored for the moment are various benefits which the participant gets as a direct result of his activity.
8. Orshansky, Molly. *Who's Who Among the Poor,* Social Security Bulletin, V. 28, 7, July 1965.
9. Unless otherwise noted, quotations throughout this chapter are from *A Proposal for the Prevention and Control of Delinquency by Expanding Opportunities.* Mobilization for Youth, Inc., 1961.
10. The original MFY proposal referred to its grass roots community organization program as organizing the unaffiliated. After a relatively short time, however, it

became apparent that this designation was not descriptive of the goals and processes of this program. In its second year, MFY officially changed the name of its neighborhood organization program to community development.

11. Although the Board agreed to clear future employees, this never took place. The major effect of tighter administrative controls was to restrict program options. For a time, instead of having policies created to serve program needs, activities were dictated by fiscal and administrative policies. In other words, the organization temporarily regressed from an essentially expressive, experimental pattern to one largely institutional and conservative.
12. Editorial support was voiced by virtually all local papers and by many leading magazines and journals. Professional associations and minority groups also expressed support and approval.
13. Cf. Chapter 1.
14. Unless otherwise noted, quotations throughout this chapter are from *Proposal, Syracuse Crusade for Opportunity, 1964.*
15. *Washington Action for Youth,* United Planning Organization, 1964. Unless otherwise noted, quotes throughout this chapter are taken from this document.
16. UPO: An Inventory of its Projects with a Description of its Program, 1965.
17. Cf. *A Proposal for the Prevention and Control of Juvenile Delinquency through Neighborhood Development.* Houston Action for Youth, Inc., January 1964. (Mimeograph)
18. Cf. *Application for Renewal of Community Action Program.* Houston Action for Youth, May 1966. (Mimeograph)
19. Quotes throughout this chapter are drawn from interviews with project staff.
20. Cf. Price, S. *Guidelines for Neighborhood Organizers.* Houston Action for Youth, April 1966.
21. *Action for Appalachian Youth, Inc.,* December 1963, Charleston Youth Community, Inc., a demonstration program for Kanawha County youth under the auspices and direction of the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime. Unless otherwise noted, quotes throughout this chapter are taken from this document.
22. Weller, Jack E. *Yesterday's People.* University of Kentucky Press, 1965, p. 89.
23. Unless otherwise noted, quotations throughout this chapter are from *Youth in the Ghetto.*
24. *Amsterdam News,* June 11, 1966.
25. Miniclier, Louis. *Community Development Defined.* The Community Development Review, 3, December 1956.
26. In some cases, the contract was seen as a device for achieving local cooperation or, at least, avoiding open opposition.
27. On June 30, 1967, the legislation authorizing the Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Development expired, thus terminating this Federal antidelinquency agency.

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